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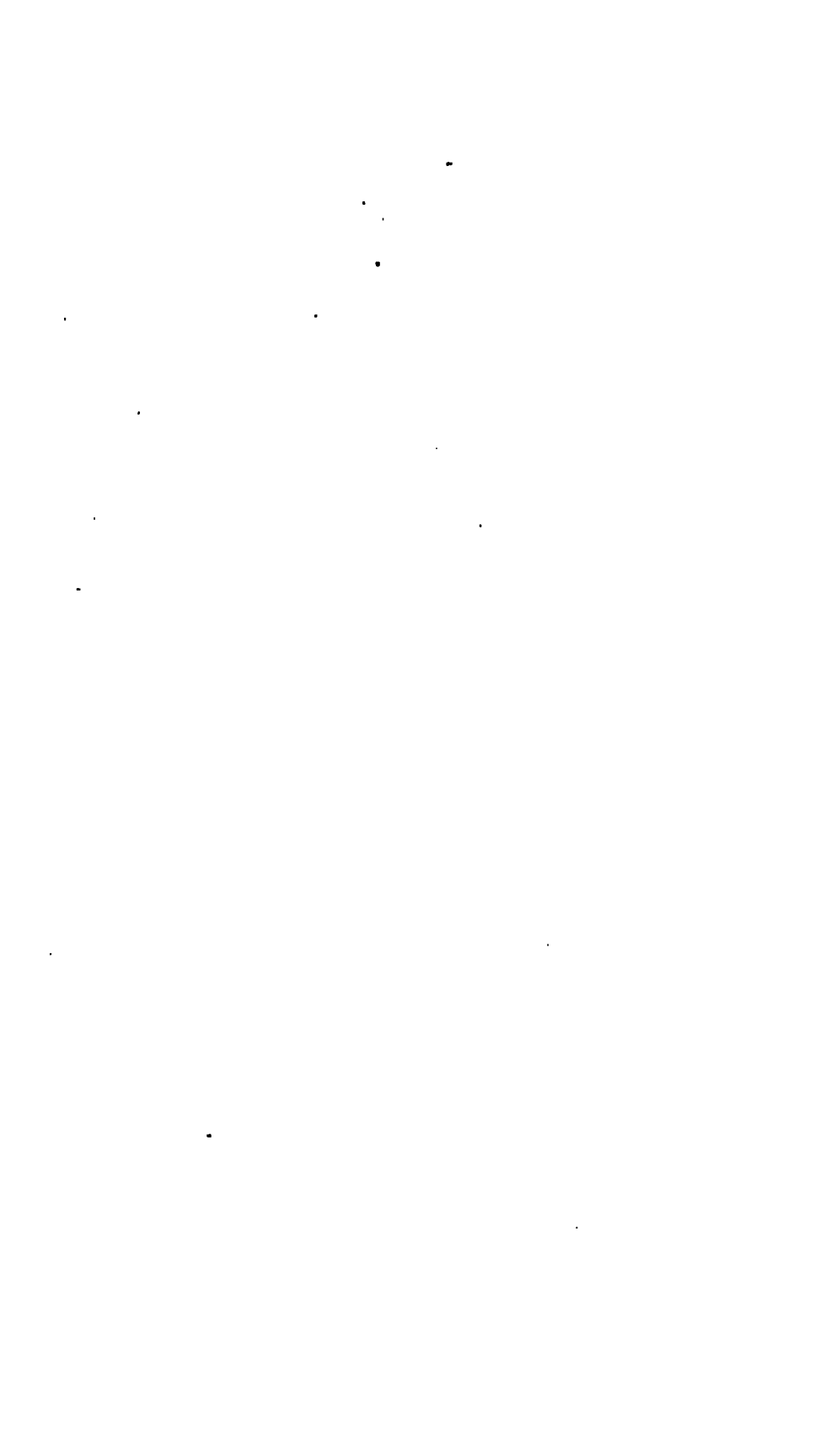
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PRACTICAL SERMONS

ON

THE LORD'S PRAYER,

THE BEATITUDES;

AND

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

ADAPTED TO FAMILY READING.

BY

SAMUEL WIX, M.A. F.R. & A.S.

VICAR OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW THE LESS, LONDON.

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L O N D O N :
PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,
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TO
WILLIAM WIX, Esq.
OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT,
AND
THOMAS POYNDER, Esq.
OF CLAPHAM COMMON, SURREY.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

NEXT to God, and those kind Parents, of whom death, which, wofully, reminds us of our fallen nature, deprived me, at an early period of life ; I am indebted to you, principally, for the many comforts I possess : and am happy in, thus, recording my most grateful acknowledgments.

Accept this volume, as a mark of my esteem and love of you both. Its dedication is proper

to you, as my patrons ; as the faithful guides of my youth, and as the prudent counsellors of every subsequent period *.

The sentiments contained in the Sermons have not novelty to recommend them ; but they possess, what is, infinitely, more valuable, —scriptural authority and antiquity. Nothing, indeed, can be new in the Christian Religion ; for the truths of the Gospel are unchangeable. But the same spiritual truths, insisted on, in the earliest and purest ages of Christianity, may, under varying circumstances, be placed in a new light, and be clothed in a different dress. A new publication is, too, sometimes, read, when an old one is neglected : and it is consistent with my sacred profession, to endeavour to discharge

* The author's brother, William Wix, is his senior, by two years, only ; but the writer has, ever, found in *him*, and in Thomas Poynder, his brother-in-law, most unaffectedly, and most exemplarily, displayed, affection, integrity, and generosity, worthy of all thanks, and of all praise.

DEDICATION.

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the vow of my ordination, by using all diligence in disseminating, from the Holy Scriptures, sound doctrine. Such employment may, by Divine blessing, redound to the glory of God, and be, largely, productive of benefit to society.

May I be permitted to add, that I know none who have, more honourably, or more affectionately, than yourselves, endeavoured to bring into practice the blessed principles of the Gospel. That these principles may flourish, when this world shall have closed upon you and upon me ; and that those precious souls which, through your instrumentality, have been consigned to my care*, may, at the general resurrection, together with our own souls, and those of all others who

* The author is indebted to Thomas Poynder, Esq. for the rectory of INWORTH, in Essex, of which he is the patron ; and to him, and his brother, William Wix, for the kind exertion of their interest, which influenced that of other kind friends, and procured for him the important appointments of Vicar and Hospitaler of ST. BARTHOLOMEW THE LESS, LONDON.

live and die in the faith and fear of God, be admitted, through the merits of Christ, into our Lord's heavenly kingdom, is the fervent prayer of,

My dearest friends,

Your obliged and affectionate

Brother and Friend,

SAMUEL WIX.

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SERMON I.

ST. MATT. vi. 9.

After this manner, therefore, pray ye : Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

PRAYER is the life of a Christian. It is intimate communion with God, and is grounded on a deep sense of our dependance upon Him for all temporal comfort and for all spiritual assistance.

Our blessed Saviour is not only an example to us of the practice of this great duty, for He, we read, was frequently employed in it, and continued all night in prayer to God^a; but He hath been pleased, also, to instruct us *how* we should pray. He hath left with us a form, short, indeed, but most comprehensive; a form, containing supplication for all we need in this world, and comforting us under every want, by representing Almighty God and ourselves, in the first petition; under the tender relation of father and children. OUR FATHER WHICH

^a St. Matthew xiv. 23. xxvi. 36. 39. St. Mark i. 35. vi. 46. xiv. 35. 39. St. Luke vi. 12. ix. 28. xxii. 41.

ART IN HEAVEN! How many endearing reflections press upon our minds, when we consider that the Redeemer of the world hath taught us to pray unto God as OUR FATHER!

God is represented as OUR FATHER. He is so, by creation; for He created the heaven and the earth, and all things that are therein, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational^b; and He is the continual preserver of all that He hath created. It is in Him that *we* live, and move, and have our being^c. Had He not made us, we had never been; and, if He preserve us not, *we are no more*^d. There is not a blessing we enjoy, of which He is not the Author. Are we provided with food necessary for our sustenance? It is He who feedeth all living creatures, and who dispenseth the fruits of the earth in due season. Are we in the enjoyment of health? It is He with whom are the issues of life and death, and who giveth medicine, as we pass through this world, to cure our sickness. Are we happy in kind friends and dear relations? It is to our heavenly Father that we are indebted for these great blessings; and, if He should withdraw His protection, our friends and our relations must, immediately, droop and die, and we be left alone. Are we happy in possessing the Holy Oracles of Truth,

^b Gen. i.

^c Acts xvii. 28.

^d St. Augustine's Soliloquies. Vide Ch. vii. Book 3. of *Pious Breathings made English*, by George Stanhope, D.D.

the sacred Scriptures, teaching us THE ONE TRUE GOD, and our respective duties to Him, our neighbour, and ourselves ? It is from GOD that cometh this, as well as every other good and perfect gift. Are we, above all, happy in the transcendent mercies of our redemption ? Hear the comfortable words of Christ : “ God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life : ” Thus, God is our FATHER, as the Author of our redemption through Jesus Christ. And “ as many,” we read, “ as received Him,” that is, as received Jesus Christ, “ to them gave He power to become the sons of God ; even to them that believe on His name : ” In short, there is not a good in this world, there is not a possession we enjoy, or which we see others enjoy ; there is not a blessing in store for the faithful, in a future world, of which God is not the author. Truly, then, may we address Him as OUR FATHER, who giveth us all good things ; properly, may we pour out our souls unto Him in supplication ; gratefully, may we meditate on Him, as our Creator and Preserver.

And, where is this OUR BOUNTIFUL FATHER ? *He* is in heaven : *we* are on earth. But we know, from the Word of God, that, when this life shall close upon us, it is intended that we should have a place in heaven. “ In my Father’s house,” says

* St. John iii. 16.

f St. John i. 12.

our blessed Saviour, that is, in heaven, "are many mansions," and "I go to prepare a place for you ^c."

In the mean time, it hath seemed good unto our heavenly Father, for wise and gracious purposes, doubtless, that we should be subject to many temptations in this world; that we should have a probationary season, during which it is our duty to qualify ourselves, by the cultivation of the virtues of the Gospel, for our heavenly inheritance; to strive to cultivate an active faith in the merits of our blessed Redeemer, JESUS CHRIST, and, in virtue of that faith, to *work out our salvation* ^d. To assist us in this important work, we are furnished with many and precious assistances in the holy Scripture: we are reminded of our own weakness, and directed to pray unto God to pardon our miscarriages, to assist us with His grace, and to guide us into the way of everlasting peace.

Let us, then, consider how we may best fulfil this first petition of the Lord's Prayer, and HALLOW THE NAME OF GOD. This will be the subject of the following meditations.

First, we hallow the name of God, by daily praising Him for His mercies, and praying that He would continue to us His gracious assistance. This will be the devout occupation of every faithful child of God, at least, every morning and every evening. Every morning, we have abundant cause to pour

^c St. John xiv. 2.

^d Philip. ii. 12.

out our souls in gratitude for the protecting mercies of the night past, to petition for grace, during the remainder of the day, that God would be with us, on all occasions, and preserve us from sin and wickedness: and, every night, our praises should, gratefully, flow for our daily protection, while our supplications should be offered for pardon of whatever evil hath been done, and that God would be pleased to guard us from the perils and dangers of the night season. These are *the least* acknowledgments we can make to our heavenly Father. Every generous soul will be employed in, *more frequently*, rehearsing the praises of the Almighty, in deprecating His wrath for our offences, and in imploring His divine aid. “As for me,” saith the devout Psalmist, “I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voiceⁱ.”

God is about our path, and witnesseth all our ways. “His eyes are upon the ways of man,” saith *Job*, “and He seeth all his goings^k.” Let us, then, be employed in a constant course of divine ejaculations to Him, which we may be in the midst of our business, without any neglect of it, indeed, with the best success to it, praying, secretly, that He would bless our labours and studies, and prosper all our undertakings; nor let us forget Him in our

ⁱ Ps. lv. 16, 17.

^k Job xxxiv. 21.

pleasures. This is to hallow the name of God, this is to profess His sovereignty ; and this should be the habitual, the uninterrupted course of every one who acknowledges God to be His FATHER.

Secondly, we hallow the name of our heavenly Father by reverencing His holy Word, and by, frequently, perusing the sacred Scriptures, which, alone, reveal to us His divine nature, and teach us the honour that is due to God.

It was the honourable commendation of *Timothy*, that, from a child, he had known the holy Scriptures, which were able to make him, as they are to make us all, wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus : for, as it is written, “ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works¹. ”

If, then, the Scriptures be, indeed, given by inspiration of God, for instruction in righteousness, we honour God when we, reverently, search those lively Oracles which testify of HIM and our LORD JESUS CHRIST. But let us search them with honest hearts, not only to know, but faithfully to discharge, our duties. To this end, let us hallow the name of God before we open the sacred Volume, and fervently pray, as becometh righteous persons, for assistance to discover our duty ; and let us, diligently,

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

exert our honest endeavours that our practice may be pure, and consistent with the knowledge which a merciful God hath been pleased to vouchsafe us.

Thirdly, we hallow the name of God by reverencing His sabbaths, and devoutly attending His ordinances. Thus, the Lord, our Creator, speaks : “ I am the Lord your God : walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them : and hallow my Sabbaths ^m.” No duty is, more frequently, enjoined in the Old Testament, nor, more affectionately, urged upon us, than this of sanctifying the Sabbath Day. And when, after the coming of our blessed Lord, the Sabbath among Christians became changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, we find the Apostles and first Disciples hallowing the name and the word of God, by assembling, on that day, to worship God and to receive the holy Sacrament. We read in the Acts of the Apostles : “ Upon the first day of the week, when the Disciples came together to break bread,” that is, to eat bread in sacramental remembrance of their Lord, “ Paul preached unto them ⁿ.” He declared the glad tidings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and “ continued his speech until midnight.” All sincere Christians have, ever since, revered the first day of the week, SUNDAY, by celebrating the resurrection of their Lord, on that day, by dedicat-

^m Ezekiel xx. 19, 20.

ⁿ Acts xx. 7.

ing themselves, then, especially, to the service of God, and to the salvation of their souls.

The setting apart one day in seven for religious meditation and pious exercises, proceeds from a most merciful provision of our heavenly Father. *Then*, it becomes us to reflect, seriously, on the goodness of God, on the salvation purchased by Jesus Christ, and on our own unworthiness; *then*, it is our especial duty to supplicate Divine assistance, to make the firmest resolutions to lead holy and godly lives, and to confirm our good purpose by a devout participation of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

This will be, most truly, hallowing the name of God, by advancing His honour, and, what we are taught is most pleasing to his infinite benevolence, — *our own and our fellow creature's salvation*. The Sabbath, which we keep, on earth, will be a prelude to that eternal rest which awaits every faithful disciple of Christ, in heaven.

Fourthly, we hallow the name of our Father who is in Heaven, by reverencing the Ministers of God's holy Word and Sacraments. Among all nations, however diversified by their religious opinions, there has been an order of persons whose peculiar office was to lead the devotions of the people to their Creator, to intercede for them, and to instruct them in the way to salvation.

The Prophet *Malachi* threatening the priests of the Israelites if they neglected the discharge of their

solemn duties, admonishes the people to look to priests for spiritual instruction. “For,” he says, “the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts^o.” Our blessed Saviour teaches the same lesson of deference to the authorized teachers of God’s Word, when, though he knew how the Scribes had, in their own persons, corrupted their sacred engagements, he spake to the multitude and to his disciples, saying, “The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not^p.” Again, Jesus saith to His disciples, whom He sent forth to heal the sick, and to preach the Gospel, “He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me^q.” And He, still more emphatically, authorizes the ministerial office among His apostles and their successors, commanding them: “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world^r.” Consistently with this authority given by our blessed

^o Malachi ii. 7.

^q Luke x. 16.

^p Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

^r Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.

Saviour to the Christian priesthood, the Apostle, St. Paul, lowly as he thought of himself, as a man, and humbled as he was, by a penitent sense of his own personal failures, still, in the honest boldness of his office, he writes, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God^a."

What, then, can be said but in lamentation of those uncandid insinuations levelled, sometimes, against the ministers of God's holy Word and Sacraments? Neglecting to consider that they are men of like passions with others, that they possess their treasures of the Gospel ministry in earthen vessels, and are, therefore, subject to all the weaknesses of human nature; are there none eager to magnify in *them* the common failings of man, or to judge of them by a measure they would not apply to themselves or others? Thus, the duties of their high office, instead of obtaining that humble attention which God and our Saviour, mercifully, designed should ever be paid them, for the common good, are often regarded with perverse prejudice or angry hostility; and all that they do themselves, or that they require to be done by others, is seen through an uncharitable or a distorted medium. Thus, the benefits, graciously, designed by their sacred office are impeded, and the name of God, which it is the duty of his ministers to sustain in all

^a 1 Cor. iv. 1.

reverence, is far from being hallowed, since our Saviour hath, most plainly, declared of His ministers, "he that receiveth," that is, he who honoureth and attendeth to "you, receiveth me^t."

Let us, then, towards the ministers of God, especially, adopt that charity recommended by the Apostle, which believeth all things, which hopeth all things^u; which candidly, reverently, and patiently, listeneth to the voice of persuasion. Hear the same Apostle, in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, affectionately, but more particularly, exhorting that due honour be paid to your spiritual pastors: "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake^x."

We thus hallow the name of God, when we honour those appointed by him and our Redeemer Jesus Christ, to preach His Word, to propagate His Gospel, and to administer His Sacraments: and we follow the example of the best disciples of Christ, in the best Christian ages, by whom the pastoral office hath ever been highly esteemed; and, being esteemed, hath been assisted in effecting and perpe-

^t Matt. x. 40.

^u See the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, which, beautifully, describes the kind, candid, and forbearing temper, becoming all, in every relation, who name the name of Christ.

^x 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

tuating, among the different classes of society, intellectual and spiritual improvement.

Fifthly, we hallow the name of God when we reverence and delight in those holy places dedicated to his service. The Psalmist, whose piety, on all occasions, demands our most attentive regard, gratefully, rehearses the pleasures *he* experienced in the sanctuary of God: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee ^y." Again, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple ^z." And, again: "I will wash mine hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord; that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth ^a."

Holy Scripture teaches us the reverence due to

^y Ps. lxxxiv. 1—4.

^z Ps. xxvii. 4.

^a Ps. xxvi. 6, 7, 8.

the House of God, where His holy name is praised :
 “ Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of
 God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the
 sacrifice of fools : for they consider not that they
 do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not
 thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God :
 for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth ^b.” Our
 blessed Saviour teaches the reverence due unto the
 House of God, when, as we read, He “ went into
 the Temple of God, and cast out all them that sold
 and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the
 tables of the money changers and the seats of
 them that sold doves ; and said unto them, It is
 written, my House shall be called the House of
 Prayer ^c :” that house, in which all righteous
 persons, Jews and Christians, have delighted ;
 wherein God is *pleased to dwell*, and *where*,
 when two or three are assembled, our Saviour is in
 the midst of them, with His holy angels. And
 shall not *we* hallow the name of God, by reverenc-
 ing the temple, where His honour dwelleth ? “ O
 come, let us worship and bow down : let us kneel
 before the Lord our Maker ^d.” “ Enter into His
 gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with
 praise : be thankful unto Him, and speak good of
 His name ^e.” O ! let us honour the name of God,
 by honouring His Son, whom He loveth—who hath

^b Eccles. v. 1, 2.

^c St. Matt. xxi. 12, 13.

^d Ps. xciv. 6.

^e Ps. c. 4.

loved us, and washed away our sins in His blood. O! let us approach His altar, and there hallow the Author of our redemption, JESUS CHRIST, who is GOD BLESSED FOR EVER, by partaking devoutly and most reverently, and gratefully, of those holy mysteries which He hath mercifully ordained as pledges of His love, and for a continual remembrance of His death^f.

Lastly, we hallow the name of our Father which is in heaven in the way most acceptable to His infinite purity, and to our own best interests, by zealously endeavouring to lead lives according to the tenor of those petitions for grace which we are taught to prefer in His holy Word.

When, after each Commandment, we hallow the name of God, who gave the Commandment, by praying: "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law!" we should, still further, hallow God by, personally, co-operating with His grace, and so testifying our unfeigned love of Him. This is the true test of our reverence and love, according to that saying of Christ: "If ye love me, keep my Commandments^g;" and "He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him^h." And, again: "If a man love

^f Exhortation in Communion Office.

^g St. John xiv. 15.

^h Ver. 21.

me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him¹.” How can we better hallow the name of God than by thus qualifying ourselves, through a faithful obedience to His holy Commandments, to become habitations fit for Him to dwell in? He dwells, indeed, “in the high and holy place.” He is in heaven: we are on earth; but He dwelleth also with him that is “of a contrite and humble spirit^k ;” that is, contrite for past offences and miscarriages, and humbly disposed to pay, in future, a stricter obedience.

St. Paul teaches, more plainly, that God delighteth to dwell with those who are pure. “Know ye not,” he says, “that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are^l.”

Are we thus highly honoured by the Almighty, by being described as temples for His holy Spirit to dwell in? Plainly, then, it becomes us, earnestly, to supplicate His divine aid, and, faithfully, to exert our own best endeavours, that each one of us may be found a pure and fit tabernacle for His majesty. Let us, then, hallow His sacred name, by approving ourselves, in righteousness and holiness, as His chil-

ⁱ St. John xiv. 23.

^k Is. lvii. 15.

^l 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

dren, whose obedience may render us His delight ; that He may be known as our Father by the joy which we manifest in keeping His commandments, and in running with patience the race that is set before us ; ever looking, in every difficult scene, unto Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith ; who will, eternally, honour them who now honour Him and His Father ; and to him that overcometh He will grant to sit with Him on His throne, even as He who overcame, and is set down with His Father on His throne ^m.

May that gracious Being, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift, who is, always, more ready to hear than we are to pray ; may our Father, which is in heaven, pitying our weaknesses, and pardoning our frailties, give us the spirit of prayer, that we may, by frequently invoking His name, with reverence, hallow it ; and, by His all-powerful grace, may, also, hallow our sacred profession, as Christians, by the increasing purity of our lives, by abstaining from all light use of His name, in ordinary conversation, and by living, in our several relations, in uninterrupted harmony with each other, as children of the same common Parent, forbearing and forgiving one another ; that, through the atonement of our blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ, we may, at length, be made " meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ",

^m Rev. iii. 21.

ⁿ Col. i. 12.

and be approved as the “ Children of the living God °.”

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, might, majesty, and dominion, this day, and for evermore. Amen !

° Rom. ix. 26.

SERMON II.

ST. MATT. vi. part of the 10th verse.

Thy Kingdom come !

THE KINGDOM OF GOD, for which we are taught to pray, in this petition, does not signify that *universal* and *unlimited dominion*, over this world and all that it contains, which is proper to GOD ; which He has possessed from all eternity, and which, doubtless, He must possess, for evermore : it means, rather, THE KINGDOM OF OUR REDEEMER ; that period, when the kingdoms of this world are to become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ^a ; when the Jews shall acknowledge *Him* to be their Messiah ; when the heathens and all nations shall do Him service, and when all shall accommodate their lives to His holy doctrines ; when, in the beautiful language of sacred prophecy, “ He,” that is, our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, “ shall have dominion, from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth ;” when, “ they that dwell in the wilderness

^a Rev. xi. 15.

shall bow before Him, and His enemies shall lick the dust ;” when, “ the kings of *Tarshish* and of the Isles shall give presents : the kings of *Sheba* and *Seba* shall offer gifts, yea,” when “ all kings shall fall down before Him : all nations shall serve Him. For He shall deliver the needy, when he crieth ; the poor, also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence ; and precious shall their blood be in His sight. And He shall live, and to Him shall be given of the gold of *Sheba* : Prayer, also, shall be made for Him continually, and daily shall He be praised.” For, it follows, “ His name shall endure for ever, His name shall be continued as long as the sun : and men shall be blessed in Him : all nations shall call Him blessed.” “ Blessed, therefore,” as this beautiful Psalm concludes, “ be His glorious name for ever : and let the whole earth be filled with His glory : *Amen*, and *Amen*^b !”

That the kingdom of Christ, who is God as well as *Man*, is the immediate meaning of the petition, appears from the exhortation of St. *John* the Baptist to the Jews, that they would repent, *because the kingdom of heaven* was at hand^c ; the kingdom of heaven there meaning the *kingdom of God* ; for it is evident that *the kingdom of heaven* and *the kingdom of God*, in the language of the

^b Psalm lxxii.

^c St. Matt. iii. 2.

Gospel, mean the same thing, from the similar use of the phrase. Thus, in the parallel passages of *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke*, we read in *St. Matthew*, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is *the kingdom of heaven*^d; in *St. Luke*, “Blessed be ye poor, for yours is *the kingdom of God*’.” Again, in *St. Matthew*, we read that *the kingdom of heaven* is at hand^f; and in *St. Mark*, that *the kingdom of God* is at hand^g. And so, in other passages, we find the same variation of the phrase.

These phrases, very frequently, in the Gospel, signify *the coming of the Messiah* to erect His spiritual kingdom, as, when the Baptist grounds his exhortation, as we have seen, to repentance, on the circumstance of *the kingdom of heaven*, that is, the *reign of the Messiah* being at hand, or about to commence, by the coming and preaching of Christ. Thus, too, we find Christ exhorting to repentance, for He says, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand^h;” and in *St. Luke*, alluding to His presence with His Disciples, whom He had commanded to preach the Gospel, and to heal the sick, He says, “the KINGDOM OF GOD *is* come nigh unto youⁱ.” And, in the 17th chapter of *St. Luke*, we find, that, when Christ was asked “when the kingdom of God should come,” He answers, “behold the kingdom of God is within

^d St. Matt. v. 3.^e St. Luke vi. 20.^f St. Matt. iv. 17.^g St. Mark i. 15.^h St. Matt. iv. 17.ⁱ St. Luke x. 9.

you," that is, amongst you, since the kingdom of God began, then, to appear, by *the presence of Christ*, and by His preaching, and being preached, among them.

Combining these meanings of the phrase of *the kingdom of God*, or *of heaven*, with the circumstance of the Lord's Prayer being, mercifully, given by our blessed Saviour, for the use of those who were, anxiously, looking for the full establishment of His kingdom; we may conclude, according to the best commentators, that our Saviour, in the direct and immediate sense of the passage, " **THY KINGDOM COME,**" exhorts us to pray, that *His Gospel* might be, generally, entertained by men, with due faith and obedience; that all might own and worship God in truth; might receive His Son, **JESUS CHRIST**, as their King and Saviour, and humbly submit to His laws; that His kingdom might be advanced by the coming in of the Jews, and by the fulness of the Gentiles; that the Christian religion, in short, might prevail every where, as well in reality as in profession, the minds of men being subdued to the obedience of faith, and they showing forth the virtues of it in their lives ^k.

Having thus stated what was our blessed Saviour's original intention in presenting us with the words of this petition, " **THY KINGDOM COME,**" I shall, now, proceed to show how we may co-operate with our

^k See Whitby.

prayer, thus taught us by Christ, and humbly strive to be instrumental in advancing the Messiah's kingdom. And may our blessed Lord hear our prayers ; may He assist us with His grace, and favour our endeavours, that His kingdom may increase more and more in our hearts, and that, finally, the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ !

First, then, we may, humbly, consider ourselves as joining in this petition, and forwarding *the kingdom of our Father, which is in heaven*, when we feel that we are increasing in personal holiness. " For," as the Apostle argues, " the kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost¹." In other words, the kingdom of God consists not in any thing that is, purely, of this world, as meat and drink are, which words are, very properly, used here to signify the things of this world ; but it consists in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, that is, in a well-ordered life of temperance, sobriety, and chastity, which *produces* peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,—the peace and joy of knowing that we are acting according to the dignity of our high calling in CHRIST JESUS, and that we are *so* securing the favour of God. But, as to a worldly disposition, manifesting itself in any thing that approaches to injustice, riot, or ex-

¹ Rom. xiv. 17.

cess, we know that there shall, in no wise, enter into heaven "any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life^m." And they are they who have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lambⁿ;" washed them in INNOCENCY, and purified themselves by *a lively faith* in the meritorious atonement wrought by JESUS CHRIST; a faith that is visible in the fruits of righteousness and holiness.

When, therefore, we pray unto our heavenly Father, "THY KINGDOM COME!" let us pray, not only with our lips, but in our lives. Let the kingdom of God reign in our hearts, and be manifested in our deeds, that, when any thing comes in competition with the duties which we owe to God, it may, at once, be seen what Master we serve. This is erecting the kingdom of God *within our own souls*, so far as we are able, in this our frail existence. And we are assured, to our great comfort, by our blessed Saviour, that He standeth at the door of our hearts, and condescendeth to knock for admittance into them.

"Behold," he says, "I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also

^m Rev. xxi. 27.

ⁿ Rev. vii. 14.

overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne °." May we all, most gladly, entertain so exalted, so gracious a visitor : and may He fortify us against every temptation, that we may overcome all that would assault or hurt our precious and immortal souls !

Secondly, we may be considered as forwarding the kingdom of our Father which is in heaven, when we are, zealously, employed in righteous endeavours to extend the Gospel of Christ to places where the Christian religion still remains unprofessed. The command to the Apostle was : " Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo ! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world ^p." The command was plainly given, not only to the Apostles, but to their successors in the Christian ministry : and, if it continues to be *their* duty to *preach the Gospel to all nations*, it is the duty of all persons, according to the ability with which God hath blessed them, to assist the regular Ministers of God's Word and Sacraments, that they may be enabled, from the ease of their circumstances, not only faithfully and independently, without any bias from their hearers, to spread the Gospel at home, but may, also, extend widely *the kingdom of their*

° Rev. iii. 20, 21.

^p St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

Redeemer ; and that nations, now sunk in idolatry, may be taught that, verily, there is none other name under heaven given to man, in whom and by whom he may obtain salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ^a. This is, so evidently, aiming at the increase of Christ's kingdom, that no argument can be necessary to convince any one of the obligation under which he is to promote the preaching of the Gospel, by Christian Ministers, wheresoever it has not yet been preached by them.

Hear the great Apostle St. *Paul*, when he was forced into a commendation of himself, and comparison with other preachers, declaring the difficulties *he* voluntarily endured in the godly cause of spreading Christ's kingdom. "Are they," he says, with whom he was forced into comparison, "Ministers of Christ? I am more: in labour more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in death oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep: in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils

^a See Visitation of the Sick, in the Book of Common Prayer.

among false brethren ; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak ? who is offended, and I burn not ? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not '."

What a noble pattern is here presented to all Ministers of Christ to exert themselves in extending His kingdom ; and how may every person be here instructed in his duty, to assist, with his prayers, and with his money, if God hath granted him the power, the Preachers of the Gospel, that they discharge, in the way most acceptable to God, their high responsibility ! Let us, therefore, conclude this head by most devoutly offering up that excellent prayer of our Church :

" O, merciful Father ! who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live ; have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics ; and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word ; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord ! to thy flock, that they may be saved among the

remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold, under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord."

Thirdly, we may be said to advance the kingdom of our Father which is in heaven, when we, righteously, endeavour to give Christian education to our children, if we are blessed with children, and to diffuse the knowledge of Christ among all ranks of persons. And let us remember, that it is not enough to teach children to read and to write, and to do other necessary things towards their future subsistence, and then to leave them to form their own religious opinions: this is not scriptural, this is not to act in the spirit of the Gospel. We are to "*train up a child in the way he should go*." We are to bring up children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." We are, not only to *teach* them, but we are to baptize them "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," that is, we are to give them the benefit of the first Christian Sacrament, which recognizes the true Christian doctrine of THE HOLY, BLESSED, AND EVER GLORIOUS TRINITY, and which it is our duty, diligently, to teach our children; since it is from *a true faith* that is to be expected a true and holy practice.

All schools, then, and seminaries of sound learning and religious education, will have the ready

^s Prov. xxii. 6.

^t Ephes. vi. 4.

^u St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

support of the true disciple of **JESUS CHRIST**, who prays in the spirit unto God, **THY KINGDOM COME!** He will feel it to be an imperative duty to make Christ known among his own children and dependants; but he will not be satisfied with this: he will, affectionately, endeavour to relieve the worst evils of poverty, by stretching forth his assistance to those children, whose parents are unable, from their low condition, to teach them to read the oracles of heavenly wisdom in the holy Scriptures, which, alone, are able to make them, and all of us, wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus *.

Fourthly, we act in the spirit of this petition, when we endeavour to advance the kingdom of God by, kindly and discreetly, entreating, as opportunity offers, sinners to awake from their lethargy, to arise from the dead, and to turn unto God in righteousness and holiness.

“ Brethren,” saith St. *James*, “ if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins *.” In the general Epistle of St. *Jude*, we are exhorted, that, while on some we are to “ have compassion, making a difference,” there are others whom we are “ to save with fear, pulling them

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

* James v. 19, 20.

out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh^y;" that is, hating, so as to encourage ourselves in the most anxious desire to subdue in ourselves, or in others, all sin, which is the work of the flesh.

And, in this world of sin, and of temptation to sin, while we are, as we should ever be, on the watch against any surprise that may lead us from *our own* stedfastness, we shall have abundant opportunity for the exercise of a godly concern for the sins of others. "Horror," saith the holy Psalmist, "hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law^z." And "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word^a." And we Christians, who know that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God^b" in an unprepared state, shall feel a holy desire to save our brethren from the wrath of the Almighty. Wherever, then, we observe a departure from the love of God, and of good order, whether among our immediate friends, or others, we shall not be easy without, meekly, striving to subdue the stony heart of impenitence, and exhorting every sinner, in the language of the Scriptures, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light^c!"

This duty of exhorting others, must, however,

^y St. Jude 22, 23.

^z Ps. cxix. 53.

^a Ps. cxix. 158.

^b Heb. x. 31.

^c Ephes. v. 14

be done with tenderness ; and must, in all cases, be founded on our own visible regard to the commandments of God. Otherwise, the language of our Saviour applies : “ Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye ? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye ; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye ? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye^d.”

Bearing this caution in mind, our honest anxiety for the spiritual welfare of *others*, may act as a prevailing inducement to put the stricter guard upon *ourselves*, and we may, while we strive to save the soul of our brother, advance, too, our own eternal salvation. Let us, then, first taking good heed that there be not in us an evil heart of unbelief, betraying us into sin, on the approach of temptation, endeavour to benefit the souls of others, by detaching them from any evil course, or prevailing sin. Let us, especially, in the season of sickness, when the heart is, usually, softened, offer wholesome advice, and pour in religious comfort and exhortation. We may thus, by the blessing of God, advance His kingdom, on earth, by giving a check to sin, and may cause the awakened sinner to acknowledge with gratitude ; “ Before I was afflicted, I went

^d St. Matt. vii. 3—5.

astray; but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes *."

Lastly, we may be considered to act in the spirit of this petition, by advancing the kingdom of our Father which is in heaven, when we maintain, in opposition to all erroneous and false doctrine, the great Gospel truth, that JESUS CHRIST our Redeemer is GOD as well as Man, and that He, alone, is the Mediator, the Saviour of the world. This truth is most essential for our comfort. We infer, indeed, the necessity of repentance from very many passages of the Holy Scriptures. But, as repentance can make no compensation for past transgressions of duty, our forgiveness, we are taught, rests on the atonement accomplished by the voluntary sufferings of JESUS CHRIST. Had these sufferings, however, been endured by *a mere man*, subject to infirmities and weaknesses as *we* are, where had been their efficacy? Could *man* atone to an offended God, of infinite justice, for the sins of *man*? The Scriptures inculcate a better, a far more consolatory, doctrine. *They* teach us that GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, that he descended from heaven, and took our nature upon Him, that, as GOD and *man*, He might expiate our sins. They, accordingly, who acknowledge Christ's ATONEMENT, acknowledge

* Ps. cxix. 67. 71.

HIS DIVINITY; and they who deny HIS DIVINITY, unhappily, but consistently, deny HIS ATONEMENT.

But what do we, particularly, learn from the Holy Scriptures, on this most important subject? Do *they* teach of Christ as of a mere man? Can we apply the epithets with which *they* point to the MESSIAH to any other than to Him, whom the Centurion, in the midst of his sufferings, truly denominated THE SON OF GOD? Consider, first, that ancient prophecy of Christ, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be on his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, THE MIGHTY GOD, The Everlasting Father ^f.” Look, next, to the writings of the New Testament, which tell us from whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came, but still speak of Him as being “over all, God blessed for ever, Amen ^g.” In the first chapter of St. *John’s* Gospel, under the phrase of *the word*, He is thus designated, “In the beginning was the *Word*, and the *Word* was *with God*, and the Word was God.” St. *Paul*, in his first Epistle to *Timothy*, writes most explicitly: “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: GOD was *manifest in the flesh*, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory ^h.” In the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, the

^f Is. ix. 6.

^g Rom. ix. 5.

^h 1 Tim. iii. 16.

superiority of Christ over all created beings is thus described. "He," that is, the Almighty, saith; "Let all the angels of God worship Him,"—and "Unto the Son he saith," that is, to Jesus Christ, "Thy Throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever ⁱ."

These, and many other passages, so plainly describe CHRIST as GOD, that we must, unfeignedly, believe Him to be such, or we must disbelieve the Scriptures. We must disbelieve our blessed Saviour Himself, who teaches us, speaking of Himself, "I and my Father are one." "Ye believe in God; believe also in me ^k."

Let us, then, zealously maintain, and faithfully propagate, the form of sound words, which we derive from the Scriptures, on this important subject. Let us advance the KINGDOM of our Redeemer, by obeying Him as OUR GOD; knowing that we must all appear before His judgment seat, that we may receive according to that we have done, whether it have been good or evil. For this most solemn period, may the grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST prepare us! and let us pray fervently, that it may please Almighty God, of His gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of His elect, and to hasten His kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of His holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in His eternal and everlasting

ⁱ Heb. i. 6. 8.

^k St. John x. 30. xiv. 1.

glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord¹: to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, praise, might, majesty and dominion, this day and for ever. *Amen.*

¹ The Order for the Burial of the Dead.

SERMON III.

ST. MATT. vi. part of ver. 10.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

IN the consideration of the preceding petition in the Lord's Prayer, " **THY KINGDOM COME !**" it was observed that **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, meaning His sovereignty over the world, and all that it contained, was complete, and that He reigned as **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS !**

It may, also, be observed, respecting the petition now before us, " **THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN !**" that the will of God is already done, as it consists in His doing His own will and pleasure.

The Prophet *Daniel*, reflecting on the omnipotence of God, exclaimed : " I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing : and He doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the

earth, and none can stay His hand^a." St. *Paul*, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, supposes this question on the part of one asserting the irresistibility of God's pleasure; "Who hath resisted His will^b?" In the prophecy of *Isaiah*, God is represented as thus admonishing His people: "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure^c."

It were, indeed, absurd and impious to suppose that *we*, by any wishes or supplications, could either increase the kingdom of God, or add to His eternal power of carrying into effect His own good will and pleasure; but we may, by fervent prayer and honest endeavours, very greatly add to *our own* natural ability of executing His will; and this comprises the spirit of this petition, "Thy will be done in earth!" It follows; "as it is in heaven." To understand properly, therefore, the petition, we must reflect how the will of God *is* done IN HEAVEN, This we can discover, only from what God has been pleased to reveal to us, on this subject, in the holy Scriptures.

We read, then, in the Scriptures, concerning the angels, who are among the heavenly inhabitants^d,

^a Daniel iv. 34, 35.

^b Rom. ix. 19.

^c Isaiah xlv. 9, 10.

^d Rev. v.

that they, always, behold the face of their Father which is in heaven^a. This seems to imply that they are, constantly, intent upon executing His pleasure. They are, indeed, described by the Psalmist, as *doing His commandments*, as *hearkening unto the voice of His word*, as *ministers of His that do His pleasure*^c. We read, too, of many angels joining an innumerable company of the heavenly host, and “ saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” And every creature in heaven is represented as uniting with every creature on earth, saying: “ Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever^d.” And again: “ I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, with a loud voice, fear God, and give glory to Him: for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountain of waters^b.”

These passages teach us how the angels are employed in heaven. Considering *their* purity, *their* superior intelligence, we must conclude that *their*

^a St. Matt. xviii. 10.

^c Ps. ciii. 20, 21.

^d Rev. v. 11., &c.

^b Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

employment is agreeable to God. Now, it appears, that they are, ever, ready to execute the will of the Almighty, and to act as His messengers, which, we know, has been their employment to the inhabitants of this earth. An angel carried the glad tidings to the Virgin Mary, that she should bring forth a son, whose name should be called JESUS. “Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women! And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his Name JESUS¹.” An angel, too, appeared to *Joseph*, and warned him, in order that he might escape the cruelty of *Herod*, to take the young child Jesus, and his mother, and to flee into *Egypt*². The angels are employed, also, in the sweet offices of praising God for His transcendent mercies³, as we all have abundant cause to praise Him for His mercies, constantly showered down upon us. And we have seen that an angel was the willing and swift messenger, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, of every nation and kindred. Many other employments of the angels might be produced from the word of God⁴. By the unerring guidance, then, of the

¹ St. Luke i. 28. 31.

² St. Matt. ii. 13.

³ Rev. v. 11—13. vii.

⁴ See, particularly, Gen. xvi. 7—11. xviii. Exod. iii. 2—6. Judges ii. 1—4. Is. lxiii. 9. Matt. iv. 11. xiii. 39—41. 49. Luke i. 11—19. Luke ii. 8. 10. Luke xv. 10. Luke xvi. 22.

Scriptures, we know well how we should, humbly, but with zealous delight, endeavour to *do* the will of God, on earth, as it *is done* in heaven. To show, particularly, how this may be done, will be the object of the following meditations.

First, the will of God is done in earth, as it is in heaven, when it is, cheerfully, done, as the holy angels do the will of God, and as it was done by OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR, when HE descended from heaven, visited the earth, and was pleased, for us men and our salvation, to veil His GODHEAD in our *humanity*, and, voluntarily, to submit to suffering and death upon the cross.

We read of the angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And we have observed how ready they are to be employed in the service and worship of God in heaven. Exalted as *they* are above *us*, *their* chief delight appears to be in praising God, in adoring His excellences, and in gratefully rehearsing the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ; though it does not appear how *they* were benefited by His gracious ministry. Consider, too, with what pious and happy zeal holy men of old,—Moses and the Prophets,—engaged in the service of the Almighty, and strove to persuade others to engage in it. "I call heaven and earth," saith *Moses* to the children of *Israel*, "to record this day against you, that I have set before you life

" Heb. i. 14.

and death, blessing and cursing : therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live : that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him," for it is added, in most grateful acknowledgment of God's infinite power and goodness, "for He is thy life, and the length of thy days^o." *Joshua*, too, in his holy zeal to do God true and laudable service, having assembled all the tribes of Israel, and related God's benefits, gratefully resolves : "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord^p." He resolved, with full purpose of heart, cheerfully, to resign himself to the Lord, and to choose Him for his portion, willingly, devoting himself, soul and body, to His service. Meditate, moreover, on the pious delight in the commandments of God, and in executing His will, as expressed in various passages of the Psalms : "Consider," saith the Psalmist, "how I *love* thy precepts ; quicken me, O Lord, according to thy loving kindness^q." "O, how I love thy law ! it is my meditation all the day^r." "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust ; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised^s." "O love the Lord, all ye His

^o Deut. xxx. 19, 20.

^p Joshua xxiv. 15.

^q Ps. cxix. 159.

^r Ps. cxix. 97.

^s Ps. xviii. 1—3.

saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; all ye that hope in the Lord^t." And, among numerous other passages, consider the pious gratitude of the following: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies^u."

But, above all, contemplate that great example of all godliness afforded us by JESUS CHRIST. His readiness to do the will of God was such that He neglected the ordinary refreshments of nature to execute it. When His Disciples, observing this, prayed Him to eat, His reply was: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work^x."

Let us, then, do *the will of God, in earth as it is in heaven*, with alacrity, with zeal, with promptitude, as the angels of God do it in heaven, and in earth, also, when they are sent forth to minister to the sons of men. This is *our* duty; this is *our* pleasure,—if we have grace to do it; and this will, through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, secure us a future reward in those heavenly mansions, where the blessed inhabitants are in peace

^t Ps. xxxi. 23, 24.

^u Ps. ciii. 1—4.

^x St. John iv. 34.

and love with each other, and are, ever, ready and delighted to praise God, and to worship Him with the heavenly host.

Secondly, the will of God is done in earth as it is in heaven, when we delight in *doing* His commandments, in hearkening unto His word, and are the happy ministers, on every opportunity that offers, to *do* His pleasure. “Blessed is the man,” saith the Psalmist, “that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.” Again: “With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes.” Again: “And I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved.” If we partake of this love of God’s commandments, we shall then delight to *do* His will, and to make known His ways upon earth. “I delight,” saith the good Psalmist, in language, prophetic of Christ, “I delight to *do* thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord; thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness

^y Ps. i. 1, 2.

^z Ps. cxix. 13—16.

^a Ps. cxix. 47.

within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation ^b.”

May the grace of God incline us, thus to delight in spreading the knowledge of His statutes, and to take pleasure, also, ourselves in His service, that we may feel as David did, when he professed his joy for the Church, and devoutly exclaimed: “I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord ^c.” Let us, in like manner, be glad to pay our vows in the courts of the Lord’s house. Our blessed Saviour was constant in His visits to the temple. Though He knew that the Jewish worship was much corrupted, and was soon to give way to the purer service of Christianity, yet He was most exemplary in His attendance at the stated periods. Beyond this, such was His delight in the service of God, that He, often, retired from the society of men, and passed, in private, much of His time in prayer. Cultivate, then, an habitual delight in praying unto God, and in praising him among the assemblies of His saints on earth, and in hearkening unto His word, read to you from the Bible, or declared by His Ministers. Delight to act as the ministers of His pleasure, in propagating His truth, in relieving His people, who are suffering, in succouring misfortune, and in protecting virtue;

^b Ps. xl. 8—10

^c Ps. cxxii. 1.

in strengthening, to the best of our power, such as do stand, in comforting and helping the weak hearted, and in raising up them that fall. This is *doing* the will of God on earth.

Thirdly, the will of God is done in earth as it is in heaven, when we are employed,—for so the angels are employed in heaven,—in praising and worshipping the Lamb that was slain, even JESUS CHRIST, to whom we are indebted for our redemption from the bitter effects of sin, committed ungratefully against the Father of all mercies. And we have, indeed, abundant cause for praise to JESUS CHRIST, for His transcendent mercies in delivering us from the bondage and punishment of sin. Consider how dearly our release and our pardon were purchased by the Son of God! Read the Gospel account of His sufferings, from the cradle to the last sad hour of His crucifixion, when he exclaimed: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me^d,” and yielded up the ghost! *Then*, the earth trembled; *then*, the rocks were rent; *then*, the sun withdrew his light; and *then*, the bodies of many saints, which slept, arose from their graves and went into the holy city. Truly, the blessed Jesus was, in the day of His mortality, when in great humility He visited the earth, *a man of sorrows* and *acquainted with grief*. But He was wounded for *our* sins; He was smitten for *our* transgressions!

^d St. Matt. xxvii. 46.

How grievous must those sins, how tremendous must those transgressions, have been, that, in the counsel and wisdom of God, it was thought proper that such sufferings should be undergone, to ransom us, by that well-beloved Son, in whom God was well pleased ! It was for *our* sakes, for *our* salvation, that HE endured poverty, the contradiction of sinners, and the bitter agonies of the cross. Shall not we, therefore, adore Him ? Shall not we praise Him ? Shall not we join with the heavenly host, and with saints on earth, in singing glory to the Lamb that was slain ! Hosannah to the Son of David ! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ! Yes, my brethren, sweet is the voice of praise, springing from grateful souls, and employed in celebrating the unbounded mercies of God in Christ Jesus. Here, every tender feeling that does honour to our nature is employed ; here, the best sentiments of the soul are brought into action. When, then, we reflect on our sanctification, through the blood of our Redeemer, who hath atoned for those sins of which we are repentant, then, as the foundation of a godly life, let us, in true faith, joyfully say with *St. Peter* : “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled ; and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through

faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last times. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls *."

Fourthly, the will of God is done in earth as it is in heaven, when the Gospel of Christ is acknowledged; when it is preached to every nation and people. For God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him through Christ^f. This is the language of heaven: this should be the language of the earth. The mercies of God are universal, as are the petitions we are taught to offer in this divine prayer, which is formed in the plural, "*Our* Father, which art in heaven," embracing all persons and nations, who, in the exercise of a true faith, are to be benefited by the *all sufficient merits* of JESUS CHRIST. An angel, as has already been observed, was seen by St. *John* flying in the midst of heaven^g, having the everlasting Gospel to

* 1 Pet. i. 8—8.

^f Acts x. 34, 35.

^g Rev. xiv. 6.

preach to them that dwell on the earth, &c. This is *the will of God*, that *all nations* should come to the knowledge of salvation by Jesus Christ, and this is the will of God, that we should, as He shall bless us with opportunity, make His way *known upon earth*, His saving health *among all nations*^h. Let us, therefore, obey the will of God, by teaching *all persons*, who are yet ignorant (and by nature we are all ignorant,) of the true God and of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is to divine revelation, to the word of God, to the holy Scriptures, that we are indebted for this saving knowledge. To the Scriptures, then, resort for knowledge, yourselves; and, *then*, in gratitude for the benefits of a revelation, to which you are indebted for all you know of your salvation, teach to *others* the sacred truths which that revelation contains. Teach them that they are, naturally, poor and naked, and destitute of all knowledge that can profit them; but that, through faith in that Redeemer, made known to them in the word of God, they may become wise unto salvation.

Lastly, the will of God is done, when we are employed in unfeignedly *praising* Him for His mercies: for so the heavenly host are employed; and this His will is, especially, accomplished on earth; when we praise Him, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to His service, and by walking before Him in righteous-

^h Ps. lxxvii. 2.

ness and holiness all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord ⁱ. “For,” as St. *Paul*, in his Epistle to *Titus*, observes, “the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ^k.” And, as we read in the same Apostle’s Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, “this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God ^l.” Let us, then, no longer,—now that we are called in Christ,—live “in the flesh, to the lusts of *men*, but to the will of God ^m.” We know, from the caution of our blessed Saviour, that it is, now, our duty to *strive* to be *perfect*, even as our Father which is in heaven is *perfect* ⁿ; and though, under the infirmities of our nature, in this world of temptation, we cannot, indeed, attain to a state of sinless perfection; still we may, and we must, cultivate

ⁱ General Thanksgiving.

^k Titus ii. 11—14.

^l 1 Thess. iv. 3—5.

^m 1 Pet. iv. 2.

ⁿ St. Matt. v. 48.

a holy temper, struggling for spiritual victory, amidst much trial, and increasing, *more and more*, in godliness, till we come, “ in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ °.” *Then*, our honest endeavours, founded on faith unfeigned, will be accepted; *then*, our imperfections will be blotted out by the meditation of CHRIST JESUS; *then*, though we are tied and bound with the chain of our sins, the pitifulness of God’s great mercy will loose us ^p, and, *then*, we who have, faithfully, performed the will of God on earth, shall, in virtue of Christ’s meritorious atonement, be admitted into “ the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant ^q ;” to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, three Persons and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, might, majesty, and dominion, this day and for ever. *Amen.*

° Ephes. iv. 13.

^p Common Prayer.

^q Heb. xii. 22—24.

SERMON IV.

ST. MATT. vi. 11.

Give us this day our daily bread.

ALL persons, whatever their rank or their condition may be ; however they may abound in what others want, or however they may have to toil for the necessities of subsistence, are exhorted to pray unto their Father which is in heaven, that He would give them their daily bread.

And, if we direct our views to the course of this world, we shall discover, apart from the sacred authority by which the divine petition is commended to us, abundant reason for it. As *Solomon* well observed, “ Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not ? Riches certainly make themselves wings ; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven*.” How many instances do we witness of the wealthy becoming poor ! How many unforeseen accidents are there, against which no human prudence could guard ; by which the fortunes of our fellow-

* Prov. xxiii. 5.

creatures are reversed; by which the needy take the place of the wealthy, and the rich are sent empty away! How many disappointments in trade! How many, in possession of all that this world can grant towards happiness, are ruined by their servants, or by those in whom they have confided, and, not unfrequently, by their children! How many, by their own rash speculations, and by disregard of the Apostle's admonition to contentment; even when, beyond food and raiment, on which the Apostle's admonition is grounded, they have abounded in all the luxuries of the world! *Then*, they have been insensible to that dignified acquiescence in their good fortune, which, alone, could give value to it; *then*, they have soared to something higher, and, in weakness, have sunk far below the condition in which Providence had, kindly, placed them!

Against these accidents, and against these temptations, we have all occasion to pray. God, too, may, in His transcendent mercy and infinite wisdom, in order to check some latent disposition to pride, or to intemperate abuse of the good things we possess, see fit to deprive us of them by means of His own, acting through visible operations in this world,—by storm, or by sickness, or by the things even that should administer to our health and well-being.

This divine petition, “ Give us this day our daily bread,” embraces all these cases. It teaches

us, not only that we are indebted to God for all that we possess ; but it leads us, also, to reflect, seriously, on our dependant state, and to use the necessary caution to protect ourselves, under divine Providence, from its inconveniences.

Many pious commentators include in this petition, prayer to Almighty God for the daily succours of His grace, that, from the sanctifying influences of His Holy Spirit, we may derive sustenance against every temptation that would assault and hurt our souls. As every good gift cometh from above,—the power to think and to do what is acceptable to God,—as well as our daily bread, we are, certainly, justified in having *spiritual aid*, the bread offered by our Saviour, in the Gospel, in view, when we, devoutly, offer the petition. I shall, therefore, in a familiar way, point out how we may, practically, improve a petition, divine in its origin, and extensive in its application : GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD !

Are you, then, rich ? Do you abound in what are called the good things of this world ? Have you houses, and lands, and money ; and do you think that, when you have freely partaken of these blessings, you can leave the rest of your substance for your babes ? Alas ! you know not how soon you may be deprived of these your valued possessions, these your treasures, which you may, fondly, imagine to be secure from the effects of moth, or rust, or thieves. And, from whom have you, hither-

to, enjoyed them? Hath *your* arm, *your own* strength, or *your own* wisdom, procured them? All that you have is from God. Every blessing is His free gift. He is the Author of all that is good; and there is nothing we enjoy,—the air we breathe, the bread we eat, the clothing we have, the health we possess, the medicine that healeth our sickness, the skill that directs its use,—but all is from a bountiful God. Let HIM, for a moment, withdraw His protecting hand, we are, *then*, worse than losers of all. We can, never, recover ourselves. So long as His favour and protection are denied us; so long we remain poor and wretched, and destitute of all that is, in the smallest degree, valuable. It is in HIM that we, alone, “live, and move, and have our being^b.” Are you, then, rich? O! consider from whom it is that you are, thus graciously, distinguished from the great majority of your fellow-creatures. Humbly meditate what there is in *you*, that *you* should be thus favoured. Are you *purser* than others? Are you lovers of God, *more* than your neighbours? Are you more useful than they are in their generation? Is the land more fruitful, by *your* superior wisdom, and better directed labours? No! but you owe *all* to the bounty of God, and may be deprived of *all*, in a moment, at His command,—of riches, of health, of lands, of

^b Acts xvii. 28.

children, of your meat and of your drink, and may be reduced to the necessity of working for your daily bread. Have *you*, then, less need than *others*, to pray : “ Our Father, which art in heaven ; Give us this day our daily bread ? ” Assuredly, you have, rather, so far as it is possible for one individual to be under superior obligation of supplicating for daily assistance than another, the greater need to offer the petition, both in gratitude for your *present endowments*, and in *watchfulness* over your numerous temptations ; since riches, if not duly managed, are a sad snare to their possessors. Pray, then, unto God, that He would give you your daily bread ; that He would render you sensible of your entire dependence upon Him for it ; and that He would, while He, mercifully, bestows it upon you, grant you tempers and habits of godliness and sobriety, that you may, honourably, secure, by His protecting favour, the blessing you enjoy. If it should be the good pleasure of the Almighty to listen to your prayers, *then*, be careful to make a proper use of your riches, by applying them to the good of society, by encouraging all righteous and salutary institutions, intended to promote the benefit of your brethren ; and by, prudently, dealing out your substance to feed the hungry, and procure clothing for the naked ; for those who are willing to assist themselves ; but who, from sickness, from want of work, from large and expensive families, or

from any other cause, are unable. *They*, it is to be hoped, pray for their daily bread. If they, honestly, strive to obtain it, in that humble situation of life in which God has been pleased to place them, and are unable, do *you* seek to be the honoured instruments, under God, of supplying their wants.

Are you poor? You may have suffered some anxiety lest you might want the necessaries of subsistence. You may have experienced, sometimes, great difficulty in procuring them. If, then, you believe that there is a God who governs the world, and who distributeth to every man, as he needeth, his meat in due season, *you* will readily acknowledge your obligation to pray unto Him to give you your daily bread. To your prayers you must, however, join your own honest and industrious efforts to get your living in that state of life unto which it hath pleased God to call you: and, in order to form to yourselves a contented mind, which is of great value, but, especially, in a poor condition; consider that you pray, *not* for superfluities, but for necessities, *only*. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD! Although the word bread may be supposed to imply every thing that is needful to us, as meat and drink, all kind of food that is requisite, yet the petition, as it relates to the wants of the body, is limited to our *daily* bread, our *daily* necessities. The petition is, therefore, to be, *daily* and *often*, repeated: and, if it be repeated with becoming attention, its tendency is to moderate our desires,

and to regulate our attentions to the things of this world.

But, as in religion, properly understood, there is nothing that is not sanctioned by the soundest reason, and most uncorrupted judgment, we are not prohibited in this, nor in any other passage of Scripture, from endeavouring, by all lawful means, to improve the talent committed to our care. We ought to endeavour to further our advancement in this world, and to lay up in store against the day of necessity, that we may have to give to him that needeth.

Let, then, those who are poor, cultivate a habit of prayer to God, to relieve their necessities; and let them co-operate, by their own labour, by faithful service to their employer, with the prayer which they offer. They will thus secure to themselves the favour of God: for we know that if they ask, it shall be given them; if they seek they shall find^c; and their own honest labour will be rewarded with the blessing of heaven. Their sleep will be sweet, they will be happy in humble acquiescence in the good providence of God, and success will seldom forsake them: "I have been young," says the Psalmist, "and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread^d." There may, indeed, be particular cases in which the religious and industrious poor may fail in procuring

^c St. Matt. vii. 7.

^d Ps. xxxvii. 25.

their daily bread ; but such instances are very uncommon. Imprudence and thoughtlessness, at least, but more commonly, idleness and profligacy, are the common causes of want. For the truth of this, we may appeal to those who are acquainted with the habits, not of the respectable and industrious poor, but of those who will *not* settle themselves in regular employment, who assail you with their importunities, and sometimes, impiously, murmur even against God whom they have neglected to invoke, as their Saviour hath taught them.

Are you parents ? Seeing that you have been the means of bringing into the world dear, but helpless, children, who look *to you* for support, it is *your* duty, not only to pray unto God that he would, mercifully, give you *your* daily bread, but it especially, also, becomes you to be industrious in your respective callings, to procure what is necessary to the support and comfort of your family, as well as of yourselves.

You must, moreover, be prudent and economical in the management of those means with which a kind Providence may have entrusted you, that you may lay up in store against the time when the necessities of your children, that they may be put out in the world, will call, perhaps, for all the resources that the utmost diligence, united with economy, can provide ; remembering what St. *Paul* gave in charge to *Timothy* to inculcate, among his hearers, that “ if any provide not for his own, and, specially,

for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel *."

Yet, knowing that it is to God that you are indebted for every, the least as well as the greatest, blessing, pray, daily and often, unto Him for your and your family's daily bread. Pray, not in private, only, but assemble your servants, if you have servants, with your children, at stated hours, to pour forth your supplications to heaven, that you may be blessed with all things necessary for your souls and for your bodies. Are you anxious that your children may want *no manner of thing that is good*? Do you desire that they may be in favour with God, as His *dear children*? Do you hope that they may be *rich in good works*? Or do you, anxiously, contrive and plan that they may be wanting in nothing that can contribute to their comfort and respectability in this world? Teach them to pray: and, if you find in them dispositions to be thus guided to a communion with their Father, which is in heaven, you have laid the best foundation for their supply with all things requisite. For, remember the words of your blessed Saviour: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there

* 1 Tim. v. 8.

[illegible][illegible]

Do you feel now, that it will not seem quite
 like a trial if I were with your heavenly Father,
 which, if you were, I feel to be my duty and
 privilege, have the power to do it. It is the
 duty of your parents to train you up in the way

you should go ; and it is *your duty*, on every feeling of love, and gratitude, and reverence, that can do honour to your period of life, to attend to those directions and exhortations which they offer you as your best friends, and on motives the most uninterested, excepting for your welfare. The greatest and most valuable return you can make for all their anxieties, their privations, their labours, their watchings, on your account, is sincere prayer for them, united to respectful and obedient conduct, in reverence to that great authority, which, by the laws of God and nature, they possess over you.

Are you masters ? It is your duty to pray for daily bread, that you may be enabled to perform the condition to which you obliged yourselves, when you engaged with your servants, by taking care of their bodies, and by providing them food fitting for them. The petition, however, supposes industry, on your part ; and, when God has blessed you with success, *then*, cheerfully, deal out remuneration to those who have benefited you by their assistance. Our blessed Saviour, in application, *immediately*, to the Ministers of the Gospel, says, that “ the labourer is worthy of his hire^h,” but this is, *universally*, true, both from the reason of the thing, and from the whole spirit of the Gospel, which teaches us that every well-founded *expectation* is to be satisfied, much more every specific

^h St. Luke x. 7.

engagement and contract. "Render to all," says the Apostle, "their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour¹."

Are you servants? Then, while you pray for your daily bread, pray, also, for your masters and mistresses, that they may be enabled, by God's blessing, to supply themselves and you with whatever is needful. And feel it to be implied in the petition for daily bread, that you, on your parts, do not injure your employers, or prevent their providing for themselves and their families, by your careless waste of the things intrusted to your care. Many a servant has ruined his master by his profligacy and waste, and been the unhappy occasion of his own and of his master's want of the things necessary to the condition of each. This is not acting agreeably to St. *Paul's* direction to *Titus*: "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity²." They who attend to this admonition, act with true dignity in their station of life; they may hope, never, to want that bread, for which they, devoutly, pray, and they may, humble as is their condition, be the honoured means of adding, greatly, to the comfort of those, by whom their daily subsistence is ministered unto them.

¹ Rom. xiii. 7.

² Titus ii. 9, 10.

Lastly, in whatever relation you may be, or however circumstanced, know and feel that you are, altogether, dependant upon God, to think and to do what is right, towards procuring your daily bread, or any comfort. Let all your endeavours, therefore, be grounded on prayer to HIM for His gracious assistance. Pray, often and fervently, that you may, not only have a competent share of what is needful to this life, but that you may, as is infinitely more valuable, be blessed with the apostolical benediction, that “ the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all ^k.”

To this end, neglect none of the means of grace. To a habit of prayer add that of devout and habitual celebration of the sufferings of your Redeemer, in the holy Sacrament of his body and blood : there, the bread of life is freely administered to every repentant and worthy communicant. A little before our Saviour was, cruelly, betrayed, we read that “ Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat : this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it : for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins ^l.” And in another place, “ I am the bread of life : he that cometh to me shall never hunger : and he

^k 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

^l St. Matt. xxvi. 26—28.

that believeth on me shall never thirst ^m.” Again : “ I am the living bread, which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. * * * *
* * * Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father : so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead : he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever ⁿ.”

Can any one read these passages, and not perceive that the bread and wine, administered in the Sacrament, were intended to be to the faithful receiver of them the most powerful means of grace—to nourish the soul by the significant and holy emblems of Christ’s sufferings, as our bodies are nourished by the bread and wine ? Let us, often, then, with hearts abhorrent of sin, and with dispositions to lead new lives of holiness, approach the altar. There, we shall receive of the bread of life, far more valuable than the bread which perisheth ; for that bread is not as the manna which our fathers

^m St. John vi. 35.

ⁿ St. John vi. 51, &c.

did eat and are dead ; but it is sacramental bread, of which whosoever, faithfully, eateth, shall live for ever.

In the HOLY EUCHARIST, the body and blood of Christ are, verily and indeed, taken by the faithful, and he who, truly, partaketh of them shall never more hunger nor thirst, in a spiritual sense. God will supply all his wants ; Christ will bear all his sins that are, unfeignedly, repented of, and the Holy Spirit will aid him with his gracious influences, by which he may surmount all that can assault or wound his soul, here. And, finally, through the all-sufficient atonement of his crucified Redeemer, he shall be admitted into those celestial regions, where the bread of this world shall not be wanted ; but where that “ bread of life °,” that “ living bread which came down from heaven ¢,” shall, eternally, profit every believer ; and where they who do Christ’s “ commandments, may have right to the tree of life,” and may “ take the water of life freely ¢.”

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three persons in one adorable Godhead, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, praise, majesty, and dominion, now and for ever. *Amen.*

° St. John vi. 48.

¢ St. John vi. 51.

¢ Rev. xxii. 14, &c.

SERMON V.

ST. MATT. vi. 12.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

ONE of the innumerable blessings attendant on the Christian Religion is, that its precepts, if obeyed, advance the prosperity of this world, and promote the comfort of its inhabitants; while they prepare us for an entrance into the kingdom of heaven, the future inheritance of every faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

The petition of the Lord's Prayer, now before us, must sink deep into the breast of every generous person who, devoutly, offers it—"FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES!" In how numerous instances do we offend! How dependant are we all on Almighty God for pardon of grievous offences against His laws, and shameful omissions of our known duty! Where is the man; where the woman; where the child, that sinneth not? In sin hath our mother conceived us^a; and "who can bring a clean thing

^a Psal. li. 5.

out of an unclean ^b?" But, beyond our *original* depravity, consequent on the transgression of our first parents, how sadly have *we*, by our *own* thoughtless or wilful misconduct, co-operated with our fallen nature, and consented to diverse lusts and wicked imaginations! When passion usurps the place of reason; when the laws of God and of man are set at defiance; when, though we know our dependant state, we yet neglect to seek from heaven the succours, without which we must fall,—*then*, are we not trespassers? *Then*, should we not humbly sue for forgiveness? Yes! we all are wilful, and many of us habitual, violaters of God's laws, and have all, therefore, need to pray, in the language of our excellent Church: "O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!"

Yet, while we feel this, and while we are taught from heaven that such a feeling is proper, we are, in tender regard to the honour and consistency of our nature, and in mercy to our fellow-creatures, taught, also, the importance, the necessity, of our forgiving the trespasses that are committed against us. "Forgive us our trespasses, *as we forgive them that trespass against us!*" and our blessed Saviour, moreover, expressly says, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses ^c."

^b Job xiv. 4.

^c St. Matt. vi. 15.

It may be proper, however, to observe, that when we pray to our Father which is in heaven to forgive us, *as we forgive others*, it is not intended—far be it from any to suppose that it can be intended,—that any practice of our own can be assumed as a motive to the conduct of Almighty God. This is spoken, partly, in condescension to our infirmities, and partly, to convey to us the ground on which, alone, *we* can expect forgiveness, namely, that *we* cultivate a disposition to pardon others, to profit from the amazing love of God, who is ever disposed to receive the penitent sinner into the arms of His infinite mercy, and who condescended, even, to send His Son into the world to save sinners, to expiate their offences by His death, and, by His resurrection, to open to them the kingdom of heaven. O! AMAZING MERCY! O TRANSCENDANT GOODNESS! O UNMERITED BOUNTY OF DIVINE LOVE!—“the love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge^d.

Thus infinite are the mercies of God to us, He being reconciled, and permitting our offences to be blotted out, through the all-sufficient ministry of JESUS CHRIST. And if “God so loved us,” we, as St. *John* draws the inference, “ought also to love one another^e.” And as that love is, signally, expressed in the forgiving our brother his trespasses, let us, therefore, consider some of the most common in-

^d Eph. iii. 19.

^e 1 John iv. 11.

stances whereby we may comply with the spirit of this petition.

First, we are freely to forgive *every* man, whether he stands in any relation to us or not, beyond that in which we and every fellow-creature are, indeed, mutually related, his trespasses, *if he repent of them*. Our praying for the forgiveness of *our* trespasses, supposes that *we are* repentant for them. This, too, is the rule given by our Saviour, when He teaches His disciples to avoid giving offence: "Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee, seven times in a day, and, seven times in a day, turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him^t." No lengthened argument can, more plainly, illustrate, nor, more strongly, establish, the Christian principle of forgiveness, than is conveyed in this short passage.

The Christian Religion will, whenever it is accurately considered, be found, in all its parts, adapted to exalt the nature of man, and to forward the best interests of society. We are not required by it to pardon, in an unqualified way, every one, the moment he may, wilfully, commit a trespass against us; for this might encourage the trespasser in his sin, and endanger the salvation of his soul; but, *if he*

^t St. Luke xvii. 3, 4.

repent, if he *acknowledge* his trespass, and show the true signs of repentance, by *real sorrow* for *having committed the offence*, by sincere resolution to commit it no more, and by making the best restitution in his power, if the offence be of a nature to admit of restitution; *then*, we are to forgive him, and to forgive him, too, *frequently*, if he shall, *frequently*, offend, through *weakness*, and not through *habitual* and *intentional wickedness*, and, *as frequently, repent*. If he trespass, seven times in a day, that is, as the phrase imports, *very frequently*, and shall, seven times in a day, repent, we are to forgive him. *Then*, God will, mercifully, forgive *us* our great and crying sins, long and repeatedly, committed.

But, more particularly, we are, secondly, if we are trespassed against as parents, by stubbornness on the part of our children, by impatience of advice, by neglect of rules, affectionately proposed for observance, by youthful levities, pursued in disregard of our tenderest counsel, by general heedlessness, or, even, by youthful lusts, dissipation, and extravagance, beyond our means to support; still, if our children *repent, truly* repent, we are to forgive them. The same rule applies *to them* as to ordinary persons. They are not to be encouraged in their follies and offences, their levities, their rudenesses, their excesses, by *unconditional* forgiveness. The forgiveness that parents can, only, show,

is on the liberal, the Christian, condition, of unfeigned sorrow, confession of trespass, and repentance.

Consider the tender, the interesting history of the prodigal son, as it is in the Gospel of St. *Luke*. "A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, Father! give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And, not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living^s."

It would be contrary to the dignity of the sacred Scriptures, to describe, minutely, all the little domestic occurrences that would first, probably, operate in the mind of the young man, before he came to this resolution. He might dislike the rules which his father had prescribed for the conduct of his family; he might become impatient of the regular returns of parental arrangement; he might dislike the admonitions which his own levities rendered necessary. He and his elder brother might not, affectionately, agree together, and he might require greater liberties and licence of living at home, than his father could grant; or many other occasions of restlessness, such as are, too commonly, seen in families, might prevail in the breast of this

^s St. Luke xv. 11—13.

young man. He, therefore, departs from his father's house, and is no longer the daily subject of his unwelcome cautions.

But, in the absence of his parent, *he wasted his substance with riotous living*; and, "when he had spent all, he began to be in want." In addition, there had arisen "a mighty famine in the land," against which, in his thoughtlessness, he had not provided: and, having now no father present to supply his wants, nor to correct his improvidence, he became in such dire distress, that he, not only, joined himself "to a citizen of that country to feed swine," but "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat." When, amidst all this distress, "he came to himself, he said, how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father^h."

Now, mark the conduct of the father. "When he" (the son) "was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed himⁱ." It does not appear, that his father had, previously, when the son asked him to divide to him his portion, used much, or

^h St. Luke xv. 14—20.

ⁱ St. Luke xv. 20.

any particular, dissuasive from his leaving his house. We may suppose, however, from the general tenderness of the father, that he granted his petition with many a bitter pang, and with much foreboding of mischief. He had, perhaps, repeatedly, checked his extravagances, remonstrated against his stubbornness, and, at former periods, intreated, in vain, his amendment and return to good order. It remained then, only, at his present years, to give him his portion, and to commend him to heaven. What use the son made of his portion, and his liberty, the Parable teaches us. But, immediately as the feelings of penitence arise in his mind, “When he was yet a great way off,” on his return home, and to his duty, “his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him ^k.” Can any thing be more beautiful, more tender, more affecting, than this description! Can any reasoning, equally well, display *the principle*, on which *we* are to forgive; namely, the principle of *repentance*? The father had not, indeed, yet heard that his son *was* penitent; but he anticipated the happy fact the moment he saw him, and, soon, heard from his own mouth: “Father! I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ^l.” He was conscious that his offence was not against his father, *only*, nor, *principally*; but his language is: “I have sinned

^k St. Luke xv. 20.^l St. Luke xv. 21.

against heaven, and in thy sight." Here was true penitence. All our offences are *against heaven*, primarily. "How," said *Joseph*, when powerfully importuned to an act of dishonour against his master, "how can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ^m?" His sin, accordingly, against heaven, and before his father, the prodigal son confesses; and, *then*, as a guide to all parents, how they may forgive their children, as they expect, themselves, forgiveness, *the best robe is brought forth, a ring is put on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and the fatted calf is killed!* May a merciful God incline the heart of every father, of all who name the name of Christ, to act in the spirit of this most affecting Parable: and may HE, in much pity, grant true repentance to every one of us that has wandered, like a lost sheep, from HIS ways!

But, thirdly, are you sons or daughters, and do you think that your parents have trespassed against *you*? Do you imagine that they have transgressed, by lavishing the means that should have been to *your* support and comfort? Do you suppose that your education has been neglected? Or do you charge your parents with undue severity? Doubtless, in these, and many other instances, parents *may* offend; but, such is the love which a kind Providence hath planted in their breasts toward

^m Gen. xxxix. 9.

their children, that the instances are, comparatively, few.

With respect to the last case adduced,—undue strictness or severity,—certainly, the failure of parents is not, commonly, in this way. It is, indeed, *so rare*, that, notwithstanding all the provocations which parents meet with to irritate their tempers and sour their dispositions, the Psalmist, who knew well what was in man, illustrated the mercy of God towards us by the tender pity of parents towards their children: “ Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the Lord pitieth them that fear Him ”.

Admitting, however, that cases may occur, wherein the trespass is on the part of the parent ; surely, it becomes children to draw a veil over the offence, and, in reverence and a feeling of dutious love, to stifle every bitter resentment. How can *they* repay the watchings, the troubles, the anxieties, that they have occasioned their earthly parents, from their cradles to their present existence, amidst, it may be, some unguarded instances of intemperate anger ! Gratitude and filial love will stifle the ungenerous murmur in every grateful soul.

Do you, fourthly, imagine that you are trespassed against by your brother, or sister, or by any other relation ? Be not extreme to mark what you think is done amiss. Recollect that, in the confi-

ⁿ Ps. ciii. 13.

dence that should exist between those of the same kindred, many thoughtless expressions, and much unguarded conduct, too, may occur, that might be very irritating from ordinary persons ; but which, in the tender relations supposed, may occur in ingenuous unsuspicion, without any intention of offence. Captiousness, which is ever improper, is unnatural and monstrous among relations, who should be dear to each other ; and who should know no contention but that of, affectionately, striving how best to excel, in mutual confidence of esteem and affection.

Recollect, too, that out of your family, you may have *many acquaintances*, while you can expect *few friends* ; but, where there is a foundation of good sense and good temper, persons, allied to each other, by family, may be expected to be such friends as to be beyond the possibility, almost, of giving or of receiving offence. “ A friend,” saith Solomon, “ loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity °.” Every consideration, indeed, of policy, should render brothers and sisters, and all other relations, very careful against giving offence, and most backward to receive any. Let them feel “ how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity ^p.” Feeling this, let them, out of that love which *hopeth all things*, and is never *easily provoked*, forgive each one his brother their trespasses.

° Prov. xvii. 17.

^p Ps. cxxxiii. 1.

Are you, fifthly, trespassed against by robbers? Are you despoiled of your property? And are you, from affluence, reduced to poverty, by the wickedness of others? While, in duty to society, you ought not to let the offence pass *unnoticed* or *unpunished*, you may pity, and you ought to pity, the trespasser, and pardon him, too, *if he unfeignedly repent*. Admonish him, kindly. If he hear thee not, rebuke him. Perhaps, you may gain him; perhaps, you may convince him of his folly or wickedness: you may draw from him a sorrowful confession of his guilt; and, then, you are to forgive him *his* trespasses, as you hope for forgiveness of *your* trespasses.

Christian forgiveness, united to forbearance, might lead many to a sense of their misconduct, might convert many a trespasser into a benefactor, and might save many a soul alive. "Knowing," saith the Apostle, "the terror of the Lord, we persuade men^a." This is the temper to be exerted, on all occasions of trespass; to try, first, the mild arts of persuasion; and, if they fail, then to commend the offender to heaven for conversion, and while, for the good of society, for the benefit of the offender, and for your own personal protection, you must punish *the offence*, pity and forgive *the man*.

Again, are your honest views misconceived and misrepresented; and do they, who so misconceive

^a 2 Cor. v. 11.

them, refuse to be put right, when you, anxiously, endeavour to show them their mistake? This is, certainly, most aggravating, whenever it occurs; but recollect how likely it is to occur in the weakness of our nature, and in that affection which we all, more or less, entertain for our own opinions. This is no excuse for such an unjust indisposition to be turned from an erroneous opinion; but, as it is a perversity of disposition, very commonly, prevailing, we should, in the exalted capacity of Christians, pity such pertinacious pursuers of notions, once adopted, since they are blinded, often, to the truth, and know not what they think, or do. If, after our best endeavours to put them right, they still persevere to think of us as we know we deserve not to be thought of, we may pity their blindness, and forgive them for a conduct which they know not how to control; recollecting that many who may be guilty of it, may be, still, possessed of the kindest sentiments towards us, and would not be backward to do us any good that might be in their power. To forgive such requires no great exertion of the mild principles of our holy religion, and which are our best ornaments, as the disciples of a meek and lowly Master. It well deserves the consideration, however, of all such trespassers, how aggravatingly they act, and how much it is their duty to clothe themselves with that charity which of a wounded brother “believeth all things”.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

Again, are you treated with ungrateful neglect by those who owe their advancement in life to you, and who return your kindness by cold indifference? Such ungrateful conduct as this must be most displeasing, and must wound the warm heart that has dealt out its kindness on so unworthy an object. Here, then, is a fit occasion for the display of mercy. *You* have done good, and you have *your reward*, in the pleasing approbation of *your own* conscience, and in the testimony of an admiring God, who desireth that we should be ready, at all times, and on all occasions, to forward the interest and happiness of our fellow-creatures. If you have been working on an ungenerous soil, and have experienced, in return, the trespass of ingratitude, think how many unworthy returns *you* have made to the God of mercy for his manifold blessings showered upon *you*,—for life, for health, for kind friends, for affectionate relations, for competence; indeed, for every good you enjoy in this life, but above all, for the redemption of the world by our Lord JESUS CHRIST. Think how *you* have slighted the commandments of your God, and neglected the guidance of His Holy Spirit, which has, never yet, forsaken you, nor ceased to admonish you, when you have done wrong. Reflect, especially, how you have, by your sins, trampled on the riches of God's mercies to you in CHRIST JESUS, by persevering in those sins, for which *He* was crucified, that He might redeem you from their punishment, and

purify you, as a peculiar people, to His service. Have not *you* been, then, *ungrateful*? Have not *you* made a cold return to God for His goodness? Be merciful, then, to others who have, unhappily, failed in grateful returns of kindness *to you*: you may *so* become the honoured means, under God, of liberalizing and improving *their* natures, and will, assuredly, be rendering yourselves meet, according to the principles of the Gospel, to have from God that forgiveness which you have shown of your brother's trespasses.

In short, however you may be trepassed against, and under whatever grievous circumstances, it still becomes you to possess a Christian temper, apt to forgive. This will render you happy in this world, and qualify you to become an inheritor, hereafter, of the kingdom of heaven, through the mediatorial power of JESUS CHRIST.

Let it, never, be forgotten, that it is *the general temper* which is to signify whether we are, or are not, Christians; and that *a temper of mercy* is the temper that, *alone*, becomes us, as the disciples of JESUS CHRIST. Christ is pleased to teach us to *pray for forgiveness, as we forgive others*. What great need we all have to pray for forgiveness, is, alas! too clear. We all carry the proof in our own bosoms. We have nothing to plead that we should *deserve* mercy; but we must, humbly, ask of the God of all mercy,—mercy, for *mercy's sake*. We must confess ourselves *miserable sin-*

ners, dependant, wholly, on the goodness of God, and devoid of all merit. “ If we say that we have no sin,”—no sin that should exclude us from the favour of God,—“ we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ;” but, “ if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness^a.” Let us, then, confess our sins ; and let us, in a sorrowful sense of them, show that forgiveness which we all need, ourselves, from others, and from our God and Saviour. *Then*, for the worthiness of the Son of God, we may hope for pardon of our trespasses from heaven, and for a share in that great Atonement wrought for convinced and repentant sinners by JESUS CHRIST ; to whom, with the Father and the eternal Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for ever. Amen !

^a 1 John i. 8, 9.

SERMON VI.

ST. MATT. vi. part of ver. 13.

And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil.

THIS life is a season of probation, during which it is our duty to qualify ourselves, by the cultivation of a lively faith, of holy principles, and of righteous conduct, for the kingdom of heaven.

In this most important concern, we shall be beset by many difficulties, and entangled by grievous temptations. We shall find our interest, often, at variance with our duty, and our steadfastness in Christ will be endangered by the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our adversary, “ The devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour “ ;” and he, subtilely, lays his traps, in *every condition of life*, at every age, and under every circumstance.

The rich and the poor, persons of middle condition, and persons of extreme opulence, or extreme poverty, have their respective temptations. “ Give

^a 1 Pet. v. 8.

me neither poverty nor riches : feed me with food convenient for me ; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or, lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain ^b." Such was Agur's prayer unto God ; from which, it would seem to be *his* opinion, that a middle state is the safest ; and so it certainly is, in its comparative freedom from those *particular* sins which *he* mentions, those of *pride* and *neglect of God*, on the one hand, and those of *stealing* and *murmuring against God*, on the other.

But, while even this moderate condition is not, absolutely, free from those particular sins, it is subject, in common with other conditions, to all the temptations of the flesh ; to discontent with that portion of good things which a kind Providence hath assigned, leading, often, to wild speculation that exalts, either into *that extreme wealth* which is accompanied with all the dangers against which *Agur* prayed, or from its unsuccessful results, plunges into that poverty which exposes to the base acts from which, also, he, as earnestly, supplicated that he might be delivered.

Nor is *any age* exempt from temptation. The old and the young are, constantly, in danger of falling. Neither are we *safe*, under *any circumstances*, either in private or in public, in our chambers, or in the streets. Our only safety is in the

^b Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

succour of God, and in the aids of His Holy Spirit. We have the seeds of vice within us, in all conditions, at all times, and under all circumstances, and should, frequently, therefore, as we lie in our beds, and as we mingle in the pleasures and business of the world, pray with David and our Church: "O God, make clean our hearts within us. And take not thy Holy Spirit from us^c!" Or, as it is in Our Lord's Prayer: "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION; BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL!"

Now we must not suppose that God can, ever, *lead* us into temptation, in a sense that He is the author of our danger, and the forwarder of our miscarriages. This were, indeed, a most impious supposition, unworthy of us to entertain against the infinite purity and goodness of God; purity, superior to every inclination to evil; and goodness, that willeth not that any should perish; but that righteousness should, universally, prevail, and all men come to the salvation offered, through faith in Christ, and obedience to His commandments. "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin^d."

^c Ps. li. 10.

^d James i. 13—15.

Here we learn the true origin of temptation. It arises from our own sinful and unsubdued lusts, which war against THE SPIRIT OF GOD that *should* dwell in us, and influence our lives. But, when, by our impieties, we grieve the Holy Spirit to depart from us; when lust of things debasing the image of God, in which we were, originally, created, hath conceived, *then* we are tempted; *then*, we are plunged into sin.

I shall illustrate this petition by stating, more particularly, what it is we pray for, when we pray unto God that he would “lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” And, may God, “who knows us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature, we cannot always stand upright; grant us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

First, when we pray unto God, “*lead us not into temptation,*” we pray for a plentiful supply of divine grace, that we may be preserved from our own sinful lusts, and be enabled to work out our salvation, by the constancy of our faith and the innocency of our lives. Of ourselves, we are unable to withstand the shock of temptation. Temptation *will* assault us, and our lusts *will* betray us. “Our

* Collect for the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

help," says the Psalmist, "is in the name of the Lord ^f." To the Lord, then, apply in time of need, that he would assist your souls in their trying necessities, knowing that "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also, make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it ^g."

If we think that we can, in our own strength, conquer temptations, and rise superior to them, the whole course of the world teaches a different lesson. The man, who thinks not of God, who worships Him not, and who is regardless of His assisting grace, may, indeed, on motives of personal convenience, or with a view to reputation, go far towards a life of purity; but, if his inclinations are unstable, and his affections changeable, so will his conduct be. Nothing short of his *feeling* his dependence upon God, so that he daily, from his heart, supplicates His aid, can maintain man, when tempted, in allegiance to His heavenly Father. Where are *they* to be found, who are most uniformly pious, and sober, and chaste, and temperate, in all things? They are to be seen among the godly, among those who hold constant communion with God, among those who are *born anew in Christ Jesus*, among those who are often exclaiming, in their heart: "Lord save us;" or "we perish ^h!" Such persons, and only such persons,

^f Ps. cxxiv. 8.

^g 1 Cor. x. 13.

^h St. Matt. viii. 25.

may be expected to maintain their integrity, amidst all the temptations with which our life is beset. The prayer of the righteous will, never, be refused, and the Lord will, never, forsake His people that call upon Him. They may, indeed, *fall*, but they shall *rise again*. The grace of God, for which they have, unfeignedly, prayed, will not suffer them to remain in sin. They will repent, with St. *Peter*, and shed tears of sorrow, when they consider how, in an unguarded moment, they may, unhappily, have fallen. *Then*, they will pray that their hearts may be made clean, and the Lord will hear them, and have mercy upon them ; then, He will deliver them from temptation, and they shall, through the meritorious sufferings of their Redeemer, conquer their sins, and save their souls alive.

Secondly, when we pray that God would not *lead us into temptation*, we pray that He would be pleased to regulate our lives and circumstances as He, in His infinite wisdom, knows to be most proper for us, and to preserve us from those accidents which might endanger our integrity. *We* know not what is most proper for us. We do know, indeed, what we *wish* for, and are often, very culpably, impatient, if we do not obtain what we desire. *Then*, we think ourselves unfortunate : we complain that we are *disappointed in our hopes* ! We envy, perhaps, what we consider *the superior good fortune* of others, and we relax, in humble acquiescence to the good Providence of God,

which ruleth this world, and regulateth all its concerns.

But let us, if we have, thus unwisely, inflamed our disappointment into murmuring and regret, quickly, recover ourselves. Let us reflect that God, who is infinite in mercy, as He is unbounded in knowledge, may see it proper, sometimes, to deny our petitions, to chastize us with ill health or adverse fortune, in order to subdue some prevailing wickedness in us, or to moderate an undue attachment to the things of this world. The Psalmist felt that it was good for him that he had been afflicted, that he might learn the statutes of the Lord¹. In our prosperity, we are apt to be foolish, to neglect the Lord who made us, and to acquiesce in our own schemes. But *a little sickness, or a little disappointment*, if only we will carry in our minds that *all* occurs under Divine superintendence, may work to the best interests of our soul.

Thus we may perceive that many of the events which are most dreaded by us, and much of what we are disposed to call adverse fortune, may proceed from a merciful dispensation of Providence ; and we may learn how reasonable it is that we should be grateful for our lot, whatever it is, believing it to be appointed by God. If to our prayer, that we be not *led into temptation*, there be united *a firm belief in the superintendence and good-*

¹ Ps. cxix. 71.

ness of God, that He is ever ready to hear the prayers of them that faithfully call upon Him, then, we must believe that He will order all things to work together for good to us. This happy belief, this humble confidence in the goodness of God, will be the means of preserving us from many corroding anxieties, and, above all, from the temptation of distrusting the care of *our Father which is in heaven*. And who, that duly considers the spiritual dangers attendant on an uninterrupted enjoyment of riches and health, or of any other worldly prosperity, but must feel, also, that it is his duty to desire these things no further than they shall be consistent with the good pleasure of Almighty God, who careth for us, and may often deny us, in much mercy, the things on which we had, vainly, placed our warmest affections.

Thirdly, when we pray that we may not be *led into temptation*, we pray that God would, never, so far forsake us, as to permit us, through *accidental* failings, from which none of us are exempt, to become *hardened in sin*; that we should cease to think it evil, when it is committed, or neglect to repent of it; so familiarizing ourselves to sin, and, insensibly, stifling even the desire of goodness.

This is the most wretched state into which a sinner can be permitted to fall: this is that state of judicial blindness which is the effect of his hardened depravity, and to arise from which he will require a far greater power than is in himself.

Consider how *St. Paul* warns the *Ephesians* against the deadening vices, and confirmed habits of sin, which disgraced the Gentiles; and let Christians, with shame, consider, whether a similar caution is not also necessary to them: "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind; having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness ^k."

Are there not Christians who have suffered themselves to be so overpowered by some favorite lust, or darling sin, that they commit it *with greediness*? Are there none who name the name of Christ, and who yet do not depart from iniquity? Are there none, dignified by the title of Christians, to whom the prophet's admonitory caution need be addressed: "Can the *Ethiopian* change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *then*, may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil ^l."

Let each one of us retire, and, with prayer to heaven, seriously, meditate on the course of our lives, and examine ourselves, impartially. If we find any one sin gaining the ascendancy over us; if we commit it, without its leaving a bitter sting

^k Eph. iv. 17—19.

^l Jer. xiii. 23.

on our consciences, and without our feeling, deeply, the imperative necessity of, instantly, humbling ourselves, and repenting of it, *then* we may be assured that our soul's health is endangered, and, then, we should pray, "LORD, LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION!" We are on the brink of eternal perdition, and should watch, and fast, and humble ourselves, that we be not given up to a judicial blindness, to which sin, habitually, committed, as naturally leads, as faith and purity, steadily pursued, do *to the life of God in our souls*.

The deadening effects of sin we all must feel, and, if we did not, the word of God would teach us the sad, the awakening, truth. In the Book of *Proverbs*, wisdom, which is the name in Scripture for religion, is represented as, thus, uttering her voice: "How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity, and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." And, then, seeing that the parties addressed will not attend to the voice of reproof, but will, still, heedlessly, pursue their evil ways, it follows, in language that should awaken us all from the lethargy of depraved habits: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hands, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I, also, will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear

cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me : for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices ^m.” O wretched, O fatal devices ! leading to the chambers of death, and to the habitation of hell ! Lord ! lead us not into such temptation ; permit us not *so* to fall, but deliver us from our own evil propensities ! Leave us not a prey to ourselves ; leave us not the victims of our own evil inclinations !

O ! let us betake ourselves, not *frequently only*, but *habitually*, in the whole frame of our temper, to our heavenly Father, that He would be pleased to “ defend us with His mighty power, that we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of wickedness ; but that all our doings may be ordered by His governance, to do always that is righteous in His sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord ⁿ.” O ! to-day, now, this present moment, if ye will hear the voice of God, “ harden not your hearts ^o.” Attend to the admonition of your Lord

^m Prov. i. 22—31.

ⁿ The third Collect for Grace—Morning Service.

^o Ps. xcvi. 8.

and Saviour : “ Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation^p.” Remember that, though the flesh is, always, weak, still, if the spirit be willing, if the heart be, properly, inclined, if dependence is placed where alone it cannot deceive us, in the God of our strength ; if we apply to Him, He is able and willing to succour us ; He willeth not that any should perish ; and, whoever will arise and go unto His Father, he shall save his soul alive, he shall be preserved “ from the hour of temptation^q.”

Fourthly, when we pray unto God to lead us not into temptation, we pray that, weak and prone as we are to act unworthy of our high calling, in CHRIST JESUS, He would never leave us to ourselves ; but that He would grant us such pure hearts and dispositions, that He may be pleased to be ever present with us, and to accompany us with the healthful spirit of His protecting grace, in every trying scene and difficult temptation. Alas ! what are we, if left to ourselves ? And where are, *then*, our best resolutions ! Can *they* uphold us ? To a certain degree they *may*, and they *will* ; and, assuredly, if we do *not* exert them, we shall fall, *in the hour of danger*. But, still, we must beseech God, earnestly, to carry us, safely, through the temptations of this world, and must rely upon His aid, that we may be enabled to remain faithful unto the end.

^p St. Matt. xxvi. 41.

^q Rev. iii. 10.

Take the example of St. *Peter*, as it is recorded in the Gospels—how vehemently did *he* profess that he would, never, commit the great sin of denying Christ! Yet, how sadly did he yield to *his temptation*! As the sufferings of his Master were approaching, he exclaimed, with the sincerest intention, doubtless: “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I¹.” And, when Christ, who knew well what is in man, checked his confidence, “he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise².” We know the sad sequel. Through many indignities, from which our nature recoils, our blessed Lord was condemned to be guilty of death. And then, “as *Peter* was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the High Priest: and when she saw *Peter* warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch, and the cock crew. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by, said again to *Peter*, Surely, thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. And the second time

¹ St. Mark xiv. 29.

² St. Mark xiv. 31.

the cock crew ‘.” Thus was the prophecy of Christ amply fulfilled in this affecting case of the fallen Apostle. But mark the result, and may we all, in like manner, *repent of our several wickednesses* ! “ *Peter* called to mind the word that JESUS said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon he wept “.” Or, as it is in *St. Luke*, in the midst of all this denial of Christ, “ the Lord turned and looked upon *Peter*. And *Peter* remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And *Peter* went out, and wept bitterly “.” We ought to lament this weakness of an Apostle, who fell through too much confidence in his own powers ; but let us copy him in his prompt repentance from his wickedness. Let us, above all, check all undue trust in ourselves. Had *St. Peter* been left, after his fall, *to himself*, he, perhaps, had never risen from the deadly sin of apostasy ; but the Lord JESUS CHRIST, who knew the power of Satan over the Apostle’s weakness, had, before, not only, mercifully, warned him —“ *Simon, Simon*, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat ;” he had also told him that he had *prayed for him*, that his *faith failed not* ‘. And afterwards, in mercy, “ *he looked upon him*,” when *Peter* re-

‘ St. Mark xiv. 66—72.

“ St. Mark xiv. 72.

“ St. Luke xxii. 61, 62.

“ St. Luke xxii. 31, 32.

membered what his Lord had said ; how he had told him before of his weakness. He was, then, smitten with horror for his offence, and he repented of his wickedness. Lord ! never leave *us* to ourselves, but, evermore, “ raise up, we pray thee, thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us ; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us, through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord *.”

Lastly, we, not only, pray that God would “ *lead us not into temptation :*” we pray, also, that he would “ *deliver us from evil ;*” from all evil, generally, that can assault or hurt the soul, or body ; but, more especially, that He would, in His omnipotence and infinite mercy, deliver us from *the* evil one,—the devil.

The Scriptures speak of the devil as a real, powerful, and active agent in the kingdom of darkness, as the implacable enemy of the human race, and as, often, influencing and injuring the candidates for heaven. We are, expressly, warned that “ the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour *.” Jesus, we know, was “ forty days tempted of the devil ^b.” And “ for this purpose

* Collect for the fourth Sunday in Advent.

^a 1 Pet. v. 8.

^b St. Luke iv. 2.

the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil^c." The Apostle, in his second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, writes, "For we are not ignorant of his devices^d," that is, the devices of Satan, another name for the devil; and Satan, we have seen, desired that he might have *Peter*, that he might sift him as wheat. It is needless to multiply the quotation of passages, which teach us, most plainly, the existence of that most wicked angel called the devil, whose desire is to devour all believers in CHRIST JESUS. He is called the *angel of the bottomless pit*^e; *the prince of this world*^f; *the God of this world*^g; and has many other titles, all signifying great power to control those who are disposed to fall into his devices, to neglect the superior power of God, and to trust to themselves.

But we are, also, for our spiritual good, and to our great comfort, thus admonished: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you^h." We know that our great example, JESUS CHRIST, who was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, resisted the devil, that he overcame his devices—and how?—through fasting and prayer, and

^c 1 John iii. 8

^e Rev. ix. 11.

^g 2 Cor. iv. 4.

^d 2 Cor. ii. 11.

^f St. John xii. 31.

^h James iv. 7.

that the angels of God, then, came and ministered unto him. So, let us strive to conquer the devil by the power of God. "Be strong," therefore, "in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil ¹." When the devil at any time tempts you, fly to God, *by prayer*. Remember that God has prescribed it as your duty to ask and pray for those blessings which he has promised to bestow on the faithful. Go, then, to THE THRONE OF GRACE, intreat the God of all comfort, that you may, not only, obtain pardon of your past sins, but, likewise, suitable help in every season of temptation. LORD, LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL !

I shall conclude what has been said on the awakening subject of those many temptations with which we are beset, in this our season of probation, and on the power which the devil, if unresisted, will have over us, by exhorting you to pray for spiritual strength and victory, according to the excellent Collect for the second Sunday in Lent :

"Almighty God ! who seest that we have no power, of ourselves, to help ourselves ; keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities, which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts

¹ Eph. vi. 10, 11.

which may assault and hurt the soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord : to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, might, majesty, and dominion, now and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON VII.

ST. MATT. VI. PART OF 13TH VERSE.

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.
Amen.*

THESE words are, usually, called the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer. They are a concluding form of giving glory to God, which is not found in the parallel passage of St. *Luke's* Gospel ^a, and which is not used every time that the prayer is recited in the course of our Church Service. But we must perceive how very appropriate a conclusion the words are to a prayer, which leads us to God, as the beneficial source of whatever is needful to our souls, or our bodies ; which teaches us to pray, as it is, more largely, expressed, in our admirable Catechism, to the " Lord God our heavenly Father, who is the giver of all goodness, to send His grace unto" us, " and to all people, that we may worship Him, serve Him, and obey Him, as we ought to do ; and that He will send us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies, and that He will be mer-

^a St. Luke xi. 2—4.

ciful unto us, and forgive us our sins ; and that it will please Him to save and defend us in all dangers, ghostly and bodily ; and that he will keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death."

A prayer, desiring of God every present help to soul and body, and defence against all danger, spiritual and temporal, and from everlasting death, is granted on an admission, that in God *we live, and move, and have our being* ; that, in Him, is the fulness of dominion and majesty ; and that our best hopes are, constantly, centered in His omnipotence. We may, properly, then, conclude with the form of Doxology, or giving glory, now before us : " FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER !" *Amen.*

As every particular, connected with this Divine Prayer, demands our most serious attention, I shall state what is, particularly, meant by this acknowledgment of God's Kingdom, and Power, and Glory, for ever : offering, as I proceed, in the several parts, the proper practical application.

When we acknowledge unto God, THINE IS THE KINGDOM, we profess that God's kingdom is, *the only kingdom*, that is, *the only kingdom that remaineth, for ever and ever*. All other kingdoms are subject to change, and exposed to annihilation. Where is *Babylon* ; where is *Tyre* ; where is *Jerusalem* ? Are they not, famous as they, once, were, now become " waste and desolate and ruined

cities^b.” And, yet, the same springs, the same showers, the same sun, would all lend their aid to maintain their former prosperity. Without going, however, into the cause of the destruction of these kingdoms, and their kings and rulers, which is *not* before us, they establish the fact which *is* before us, that the kingdoms of this world have not perpetuity. They are, as all things relating to men are, changeable, inconstant, subject to ruin; but **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, never, changeth. It hath always existed, and it ever will exist, however the vices of mankind may seem, partially, to obscure its bright beams of purity and goodness. While all other kingdoms crumble to dust, and worse than dust—to *nothing*—leaving no trace behind them; not, perhaps, a single particle to point out the spot where, once, they flourished—**THE KINGDOM OF GOD** has no end, nor shall be, ever, without countless numbers of saints, of angels, of just men made perfect, to acknowledge its righteousness, and to bow to the dominion of **HIM**, who reigneth, and ever *must* reign, **LORD OVER ALL!** “The Lord reigneth; he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith He hath girded Himself^c.”

If, then, all things, from their perishable nature, tend to show that God's is *the only kingdom*, and that, **HE** alone, reigneth, from everlasting to ever-

^b Ezek. xxxvi. 35.

^c Ps. xciii. 1.

lasting ; is it not our wisdom ; is it not our interest ; is it not our duty, to obey Him, in all things ! Where are our hopes, but in God ? Where have we any abiding city, in this world ? Are not all things, here, *perishable* ? What are our bodies, on which we bestow *so much*, sometimes, alas ! our *chief*, or our *only*, care ? Are *they* not as a flower of the field ? Are *they* not as a span long ? Do *they* not come, quickly, to decay ? But is there, *then*, an end of *us* ? No ! “ this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality ^d.” A kingdom awaits the faithful disciple of Christ, hereafter, that is, GOD’S KINGDOM, awaits him ; into which nothing impure, nothing sensual, nothing that defileth the heart of man, can enter. O ! let us now, then, exert a lively faith in JESUS CHRIST, and in His promises ; let us, now, purify ourselves, even as God is pure ; let us depart from iniquity ; let us show, by our righteousness, that we seek that kingdom where dwelleth righteousness ; that, amidst the fall of kingdoms, and the wreck of our nature, we may soar, above, to that kingdom which perisheth not, that we may, at the last solemn hour, when paying the debt of our fallen nature, exclaim, with the great Apostle St. *Paul* : “ O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be

^d 1 Cor. xv. 53.

to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ *."

When we profess unto God, **THINE IS THE POWER**, we declare, more especially, our belief, that God is *able* to grant whatever we have supplicated in the several petitions of this comprehensive Prayer;—health and nourishment to our bodies,—and divine grace to our souls, to control our unruly wills and sinful affections. In this belief, we, devoutly, ask of Him, *His* all-powerful assistance against our weaknesses and the world's temptations. We acknowledge *His* power to maintain His own most holy laws, and we profess that to HIM, only, we would be subject.

"Power," the Psalmist saith, "belongeth unto God^f." All nations and people; the land in which they live, the air they breathe, and by which they subsist; the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea; whatever in short *is*, is by the power of God. For *His* pleasure they are, and were, created; and HE has power to annihilate, in an instant, all that His goodness, now, upholds. In HIM, power and goodness are inseparable, and His power is, never, exerted by caprice, as the little power of man is, but, ever, to accomplish some great end, some good to the sons of men.

Look abroad, and behold the beneficent signs of His power! The heavens declare the **POWER**, as

* 1 Cor. xv. 55—57.

^f Ps. lxii. 11.

they do “the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it : and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof^s”—from that heat, which, in infinite goodness, as well as power, bringeth forth to us the fruits of the earth, in due season.

Consider, also, the “great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts,” where “go the ships^h,” and transport from distant countries to distant countries, those exchanges and mutual accommodations, which stimulate the industry, and advance the happiness, of the world. Can we consider these things ; can we behold the sun, the moon, and the stars ; the earth, the sea, and all their myriads of inhabitants ; and how they all depend on God, who giveth them their meat, in due season, according to their respective wants and capacities ; can we reflect on the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, all united, by which the heavens and the earth, and all the creatures of the earth are preserved, and directed to the unerring accomplishment of their own particular purposes, and not feel ourselves, gratefully, transported, by the pious and sublime effusions of the good Psalmist ?

^s Ps. xix. 1, &c.

^h Ps. civ. 25, 26.

“ Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord, my God, thou art very great ; thou art clothed with honour and majesty : who coverest thyself with light, as with a garment ; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain ; who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters ; who maketh the clouds his chariot ; who walketh upon the wings of the wind ; who maketh his angels spirits ; his ministers a flaming fire ; who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever ⁱ. ”

BUT THE POWER OF GOD is, never, so conspicuous as in the redemption of the world, by our Lord JESUS CHRIST. Here, his *power* is magnified in *weakness* ; here, the alarming power of sin is subdued ; here, all the efforts of the powers of darkness are restrained. Our sins were powerful enough to make God our enemy ; but Christ was more powerful than they. Can we doubt their *power*, when we know that they were the efficient cause of the crucifixion of the Son of God ? but see we not a far greater and infinitely superior power in God, who conquered that old serpent, *the Devil* ; when the sacrifice was accepted ; when CHRIST burst asunder the bonds of death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers ! “ O, sing,” then, “ unto the Lord a new song ; for He hath done marvellous things : His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory ^j. ”

ⁱ Ps. civ. 1—5.

^j Ps. xcvi. 1.

Or, as we read in that beautiful hymn of the blessed mother of our Lord, where the power of God is described, most forcibly, in man's weakness, and where our atonement is signified in every line: "my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded the low estate of His hand-maiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done me great things; and holy is His name. And His mercy is on them that fear Him, from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath holpen His servant *Israel*, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to *Abraham*, and to his seed for ever ^k."

The Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, which is the subject of this grateful hymn, and which showers down mercy on all, from generation to generation, is "the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth^l." And, *whosoever liveth and believeth in Christ shall never die^m*. By the same power that Jesus rose from the dead; by that same power,

^k St. Luke i. 46—55.

^l Romans i. 16.

^m St. John xi. 26.

graciously exerted on His behalf, every faithful follower of *Him*, shall arise from his grave, and behold Him, hereafter, sitting “on the right hand of the power of God ^a.” Lord! we believe: increase our belief; and grant us grace to walk, evermore, worthy of our holy profession!

Thirdly, when we repeat the words, “*THINE IS THE GLORY,*” we declare, that *thine, O Lord! is the glory of being the author of all that is truly excellent and praiseworthy; thine is the glory of permitting and enabling us to attain to all the graces and blessings comprised in this prayer; and to be thine, in righteousness and holiness, in which consists thy kingdom, is our only true glory. We, therefore, acknowledge thy kingdom, thy power, and thy glory, in the fullest sense. The kingdoms, the powers, the glories of this world, shall fail; but the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ shall remain, for ever and ever.*

Before the heavens and earth were created, God existed, IN HIS OWN POWER, ever infinite, ever uncontrollable, ever holding dominion over all. “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, return, ye children of men ^o.” His is the power of creation: His is the glory of renewing whatever hath

^a St. Luke xxii. 69.

^o Ps. xc. 2, 3.

been decayed by the powers of wickedness, or by the malice of the Devil.

The weakness of this our mortal body, when weighed down by sickness, we all, in our turns, well know. When cast on the bed of disease, our helplessness, or debility, needs not any voice to convince us of our insufficiency to help ourselves. And, whence this sad memorial of our weakness and dependence on some power, superior to ourselves, for assistance? Is it not, mercifully, intended to remind us of the sad effects of sin, now working its ravages, within, till it shall produce the last forfeiture of our bodies, and consign them to death and the grave, to which God hath sentenced us all; because we all have sinned? But does His power terminate, in destruction? Does the grave bound our hopes? Does the Almighty delight in putting an end to the beings of His creation? *No!* “Lift up your eyes,” as the Evangelical Prophet advises “to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished^P.” And, “therefore, the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall

^P Isa. li. 6.

obtain gladness and joy ; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am He that comforteth you : who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the Son of Man which shall be made as grass ; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth The Lord of Hosts is His name^r." Infinite is His majesty, and infinite, too, is His glory. For HE hath redeemed those who were *dead* ; and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God^s. God is glorified in that He hath saved all men, who will approach Him, by CHRIST ; who will go unto Him, *in repentance of past sins*, and continue with Him, in *righteousness and holiness*. Wherefore, we may, now, comfort ourselves, and our brethren ; and may " rejoice in hope of the glory of God^t."

What, now, are the proper effects of these devout meditations on the kingdom, the power, and the glory of God ? Are they empty speculations, and fine sayings, only ? Are they not, rather, adapted to form all those tempers, to call forth all those virtues, which can do honour to us, as men and as Christians ?

If we believe that *God's is the kingdom*, should we not show an anxious desire to become His worthy

^r Isa. li. 11, &c.

^s Ps. xcvi. 3.

^t Romans v. 2.

and obedient subjects ? Should we not acknowledge HIM as OUR KING, ETERNAL, IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, as THE ONLY WISE GOD : and should we not, humbly, endeavour, by His assistance, to qualify ourselves for admission into His kingdom ? Should we not, now, show ourselves His willing subjects, by promoting that righteousness, in which His kingdom, chiefly, consists ; and should we not, zealously and affectionately, strive to increase the number of His faithful subjects—that all nations may come to the knowledge of God, and to the benefits of His holy Gospel ? Should we not pray, habitually, unto Him, that we, and all men, may be reigned over by HIM, as KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS !

If we believe that God's is THE POWER, and that He can, and ultimately will, notwithstanding partial aberrations from His laws, cause all things to promote His will and establish His purposes ; *then*, let us yield prompt obedience to Him, by whom the princes of this world reign, and by whom kings decree justice. We may, by our own impieties and wickednesses, grieve the God, who willeth that none should perish, but that all should come to salvation ; but we cannot alter the eternal nature of His laws nor His immutable justice. We may ruin our own souls ; but we cannot alter God's laws. O ! let us not, thus unhappily, resist the power which should restrain us from all impurity and wickedness ; but let us, now, obey from a willing principle ; that we may, through the merits of our Redeemer, receive

the reward of obedience from HIM, whose kingdom is ETERNAL, and whose power is BOUNDLESS.

If we believe that God's is THE GLORY; then, how worse than foolishly do we act, when we set our *chief* affections on the inglorious things of this fleeting world; when we suffer ourselves to be estranged from our spiritual life, and permit our righteous purposes to be absorbed and lost in sensual pursuits! This is not to act, consistently with our own happiness, nor to advance the Glory of God. "Whatsoever ye do," saith the Apostle, "do all to the Glory of God^u." This exhortation was given, when he was persuading the *Corinthians* to abstain, even from indifferent enjoyments of the flesh, if the pursuit of those enjoyments, however moderately, should give offence to any one, so as to endanger his belief in CHRIST JESUS. How much more important is it, then, that we act with the dignity becoming our holy profession, by, rigidly, abstaining from all the grosser indulgences which dishonour our holy vocation; and, so far from redounding to *our* glory, or the glory of our Heavenly Father, cause Him to hide His face, in anger, from us, and sink us into perdition? We are at no loss to know what those grosser indulgences are. They are instanced by the Apostle as the works of the flesh, and are these: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, va-

^u 1 Cor. x. 31.

riance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like ^v.” “ But,” the same Apostle adds, “ the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ^x.” These will work our glory: and these, if we pursue them, diligently, with humility be it spoken, we shall pursue them, to the glory of our Father which is in heaven. And HE will, never, forget our righteous deeds. They will ascend up as a memorial unto heaven, that we acknowledge Him as *our Lord, our King, our guide*, upon earth; and they, proceeding from faith unfeigned in our Redeemer, JESUS CHRIST, who came into the world to “ purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ^y,” will be accepted by HIM, when He cometh, in the glory of His Father, with all His holy angels, to glorify us with the glory which He had with His Father before the world began. Let us conclude, then, our meditations on this comprehensive prayer of our Lord, in the sublime words of our Church ^z:

“ Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now, in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us, in great humility; that, in the last day, when He

^v Gal. v. 19—21.

^x Gal. v. 22, 23.

^y Titus ii. 14.

^z Collect for Advent Sunday.

shall come again, in His glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through Him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever.”
Amen.

SERMON VIII.

ST. MATT. V. 3.

Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

CHRISTIANITY is a religion of the correctest and purest principles. We find, accordingly, our Divine Teacher, JESUS CHRIST, exerting his chief care to *model the heart*, and to *purify the minds*, of his disciples. He warns them in these words : “ a good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things : and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things ^a.” And he, more particularly, observes : “ out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies ^b.”

Attracted by the fame of our blessed Saviour's doctrines, and of that divine power of suspending the laws of nature, by which HE, miraculously, healed *all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease, among the people*, great multitudes fol-

^a St. Matt. xii. 35.

^b St. Matt. xv. 19.

lowed Him from *Galilee*, and *Decapolis*, and from *Jerusalem*, and from *Judea*, and from beyond *Jordan*. And Jesus, " seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain : and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him. And He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying : " **BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT ; FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ^c.**"

The poverty of spirit, thus recommended, is nothing mean, nor degrading. It is, indeed, not only, truly, dignified in itself, but it leads to the supremest honour, even that of possessing the kingdom of heaven. " **BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT ; FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN !**" You will find, on examination, every precept of your Divine Master to bespeak HIM the friend of human kind, the improver, the ennobler, of our nature. There is something truly dignified in despising the peevish and little notions of pride, which prevail in this corrupted world, and in adopting a train, of thought, appropriate to the inhabitants of heaven. All connected with this world is base, in comparison with that which, truly, relates to THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, into which " there shall, in no wise, enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie ^d." Like the disinterested friend of fallen man ; like THE BLESSED JESUS, who came into the world to save sinners ; the

^c St. Matt. v. 1—3.

^d Rev. xxi. 27.

disciple of Christ must renounce all degrading and low notions, and must act on those pure disinterested principles of rectitude and love, that may render him; even in this world, an inhabitant of THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, that is, *of a frame and temper, becoming an inhabitant of heaven.*

I shall, now, beg your attention, while I state a few of the most familiar instances, by which it is proper that we testify that poverty of spirit, which is the dignifier of our nature; and I shall offer some appropriate exhortation.

Are you, then, *poor*? Are you, under the wise providence of the Almighty, destitute of the ordinary means of advancement; and are you, often, under apprehension that you may want the necessities of subsistence? Think not, if such be your condition, that the blessing, promised in the text, has little application to you. To *you*, as well as to *the rich*, do the words of your Saviour reach, BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT!

Whence, ordinarily, arises discontent, that fruitful parent of misery? Whence proceed the sordid arts of stealing, of lying, and of flattery? In the language of the Apostle, on another occasion, come they not hence, *even of your lusts*? The necessary wants of nature are, indeed, but small, and such as, with common prudence, may, with few exceptions, be, easily, obtained. But, the poor, neglecting, often, to consider that their lot in life is appointed by God, nurse within themselves senti-

ments that embitter their existence, while they vainly compare their own situation with that of those whom they think better provided for than themselves. *Then*, they are deaf to the admonition of *St. Paul*: “Godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.” In this happy country, none can be without food and raiment. If they are unable to work, or, if they cannot find work, the laws of the country, humanely, provide necessaries for them. In this lowest condition of dependence, the *poverty of spirit*, recommended by our Saviour, will be accompanied by the blessing of a contented mind, submitting, in dignified resignation, to God’s disposal, and, gradually, improving into that indifference to the things of this world, which is the sure passport to the kingdom of heaven, through faith in Christ. This *poverty of spirit* will, moreover, enable the poorest person to preserve himself unspotted by the base arts of dishonesty, and will *so*, truly, exalt him to a superiority over those temptations which may be considered as peculiar by applying to his humble state.

Are you *rich*? Do you abound in what others imagine they want? Are you exempted from the necessity of labour, either of body or of mind, to

not only of their temporal hopes and prospects, but of that *temper* which can, alone, fit them for THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. “Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee^s,” is a precept founded in wisdom, as it is in mercy; as is, also, that affectionate exhortation to children—“Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord^h.” But, there is an unchristian insubordination, among all classes of persons, and in all the relations of life, that has weakened these and like salutary rules—and we witness the sad effects, *domestically* as well as *politically*. The Gospel rules of submission are not unknown; but they, alas! are, too generally, disregarded. In vain, does many a tender parent, anxiously, endeavour to enforce them. In the pride of the human heart, unsubdued by repentance, the sons and daughters of men neglect, often, to honour their parents, or to be guided by their advice. At the tenderest age, consequently, they contract some habits, and neglect the cultivation of others, contrary to all persuasion, and to their utter ruin, in future life. Thus, while they, undutifully, act, as without affection, they grieve their parents, their best friends, and are the unhappy contrivers of their own undoing. O! that the wisdom of *Solomon*, O! that the humility of

^s Exod. xx. 12.

^h Col. iii. 20.

THE BLESSED JESUS, could sink into the hearts of such children! O! that they would remember the words of Scripture: "A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke. . . . Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction; but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured ⁱ."

"A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother ^j."

We speak, here, of the *folly* of that pride, which, often, influences children to neglect the advice of their parents. Much might be added upon its *ingratitude*; but it is left to every generous soul to supply what might be offered on this head.

Are you *parents*? If you are; are *you*, in that character, exempt from pride? Need not *you* to be reminded of the Apostle's advice, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath ^k?" It becomes you to take good heed, that, in no case, you presume to *rule* your children, otherwise than by *influencing* their minds. This is, indeed, the only way by which you can, properly, rule them. If it fail, you have discharged *your duty*. As soon, then, as your children are able to discern between right and wrong, endeavour, by mild persuasion,

ⁱ Prov. xiii. 1. 18.

^j Prov. xv. 5. 20.

^k Eph. vi. 4.

imprudent neglect of stating these, and which has, often, proceeded, as well from disdaining to take counsel of the weaker vessel, as from, tenderly, wishing to avoid giving pain, has incurred expences, which the husband could *not* sustain; and instead of being, as she would, willingly, have been, the frugal manager of her beloved husband's resources, the wife has been the unconscious means of plunging him and his family into expences; proper to be incurred, perhaps, in *her* supposed circumstances; but which, in the real state of her husband's, have been imprudent and ruinous.

Are you called *servants*? I say *called* servants; for, under the mild spirit of Christianity, influencing our laws and manners, in this happy country, service is but a name. Every man and every woman, before an engagement is contracted, knows and assents to the nature of the service required. Many, however, engage in the service; and, then, in the pride of their heart, neglect to perform the *conditions* agreed to. They *will*, obstinately, pursue their own ways, and will *not* listen, with humility, to the known and repeated wishes of those whom they have engaged to serve. Can such expect the blessing promised *to the poor in spirit*?

But, consider the reverse of this ungracious character, spurning at the authority which it has engaged to obey. Consider those HONOURABLE SERVANTS, who remember the engagement contracted; who are, habitually, influenced by a de-

sire to please the master or mistress from whom, under God, the daily blessing of all that is necessary to sustenance and comfort is received ; who are clothed with humility, and in honour prefer those whom a wise Providence hath placed over them ! Are not such persons, ordinarily, happy, even in this world, by procuring good services, and often, by recommendations from them to superior stations ? Above all, are they not blessed in the pleasing consciousness that they are, honourably, discharging their duty, in that state of life, to which it has pleased God to call them, and so preparing themselves to give a good account to JESUS CHRIST, when He shall come, a second time, to judge the world, and advance His faithful disciples to THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ? O ! then, ye who are called servants, resist that obstinate temper which prevents many from discharging their duty, and which estranges from them the affections of those, whom they are bound, on every principle of justice, to esteem, and whose good opinion it should be their most earnest desire to obtain. If, indeed, any thing *unlawful* : if any thing *contrary to the nature of the engagement contracted* should be required of you, your disinclination to continue in your service may be, respectfully, stated, and you are at liberty to leave your employers to seek others, with whom you may, by faithful attentions, be more comfortable ; but, while you *continue* in the service, be careful to comply with all that you know may be, fairly,

expected of you, and which you have engaged to perform: remembering, in every transaction in which you are engaged, while in service, the dignified advice of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*: “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men^m.”

From this passage of Scripture, you perceive, that the service, to which you are called, is a service *to the Lord*, and *not to man*; and you are required to be obedient, in singleness of heart, *as unto Christ*. How does Christianity ennoble every condition, even the humblest, among the sons of men! You, who are called to daily labour, and daily service, for your daily bread, are still happy in knowing, that, if you are faithful servants, you are, infinitely, more than faithful servants *to any master or mistress of flesh*, like unto yourselves: you have the honour to be faithful servants *unto the Lord*. Blessed are those servants whom their Lord, when he cometh, shall find *so doing; so discharging* the duty of their station: for they shall receive “a crown of righteousness, which their Lord, the righteous Judge shall give” them “at that dayⁿ.”

^m Ephesians vi. 5. 7.

ⁿ 2 Tim. iv. 8.

In the same meekness, in the same truly Christian poorness *of spirit*, it becomes masters to deal towards their servants. The duties of masters and servants are reciprocal: "Masters," says the Apostle, St. Paul, "give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye, too, have a Master in heaven °." "And ye masters," says the same Apostle, "do the same things unto them," that is, the same justice, the same courteous service, in your different relation, to your servants, as you expect from them, in their relation, "forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master, also, is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him †." You, then, who are called to be masters, or mistresses, deal, thus equitably, by your servants. Let them see *the reason* of your directions to them, when, with propriety, you can, that they may serve, as *from the heart*, and be, always, sure, before you complain of them, that you make your wishes *thoroughly understood*. Treat them as *fellow-creatures*, possessing minds to discover between what is kind and unkind, just and unjust, equally with yourselves: and know that the truest elevation of soul is in the perfect victory over every particle of pride, which cannot fail to render you ridiculous in the sight of those whose humble station requires, at all times, your tenderest con-

° Colos. iv. 1.

† Ephes. vi. 9.

sideration, and whose manner of performing their services claims your most candid allowances:

Are you *subjects*; having rulers and magistrates over you, whom you are bound to obey? And shall a proud spirit, unkindly, malign the motives of your governors; and, in the example of your insubordination, deprive society of the benefit it has a right to expect from the meekness and the honourable obedience of the subject? Are you protected in your persons, and your possessions; and will you, in the folly of your hearts, despise the authority that is to restrain the wicked? Learn, rather, of your Saviour, to be *meek and lowly in heart*; and why? that you, and all your fellow-subjects, may find *rest unto your souls*,—not here only, but rest, in THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, into which the turbulent, the disobedient, shall not enter. Hear and abide, then, by the advice of the Apostle: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation⁹.” And, “submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him

⁹ Romans xiii. 1, 2.

for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well Honour all Men, Love the Brotherhood, Fear God, Honour the King ¹.

But here, also, it is worthy of remark, that there is a correspondent duty of rulers and magistrates. *They* are not to rule *in pride*; but *in the fear of the Lord*. “He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God¹.” Wherever the fear of God prevails, there will be due humility of spirit. In this respect, “Blessed,” indeed, “are the poor in spirit.” Blessed are those humble persons, who obey rulers, acting in the fear of God¹. And blessed are they, who rule in the fear of the Lord: for they are the servants of God. Their obedience to his will, shall procure peace upon earth, and prepare them and their subjects for THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, when this world shall close; and when kings and their subjects, magistrates and the people, shall, without respect of persons, be rewarded, according to their deeds.

I have, thus, stated the most ordinary occurrences of life, to which *the poverty of spirit*, recommended in the Gospel, is applicable. The appropriate advice is, that we, according to our several circumstances, adorn ourselves with that humility, which, in the sight of God, is of great value,

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. 17

¹ 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.

² Prov. xxix. 2.

and which, extensively, promotes the comforts of society.

Our relation to God, as OUR FATHER who is in Heaven, should lead us, in grateful Humility, to love Him, unfeignedly; or, as it is expressed in the admirable Catechism of the Church—*to believe in Him, to fear Him, and to love Him, with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength; to worship Him, to give Him thanks, to put our whole trust in Him, to call upon Him, to honour His holy name, and His word; and to serve Him truly all the days of our life.* But, do not some, instead of putting their whole trust in God, and calling upon Him, vainly, think that they have sufficient strength, in themselves, to perform what is acceptable to His INFINITE PURITY, without His ALMIGHTY AID? They neglect to supplicate His Divine Grace, without which they can do nothing; and, in the vain imagination of their hearts, they, unhappily, become the prey of every prevailing temptation. Blessed, then, are the *poor in spirit*, who betake themselves, in constant prayer, to that ALMIGHTY POWER, without which, nothing is strong, nothing is holy!

Our duty towards our *neighbour* is thus, also, from the Holy Scriptures, admirably, expressed in our Catechism: it is *to love him as ourselves, and to do to all men, as we would they should do unto us. To love, honour, and succour, our father and mother: to honour and obey the*

king, and all that are put in authority under him: to submit ourselves to all our governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters: to order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters: to hurt nobody by word or deed: to be true and just in all our dealings: to bear no malice nor hatred in our hearts: to keep our hands from picking and stealing, and our tongues from evil speaking, lying, and slandering: to keep our bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity: not to covet, nor desire, other men's goods; but to learn and labour truly to get our own living, and to do our duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call us.

Read, seriously, attentively, and often, this concise, but most faithful, abridgement of your duty towards your neighbour; and, applying it to your several peculiar circumstances, you will, plainly, discover that pride is at the bottom of your failures. Present yourselves, then, devoutly, at the throne of divine grace, that you may be humbled in your own eyes, that you may be kindly affectioned towards others, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another. This happy, this truly Christian, Disposition, will lead you to weep with those that weep; and to rejoice with them that rejoice. It will give you of that blessed temper which is to qualify you to join with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, in, harmoniously, rehearsing the praises of your Redeemer. BLESSED,

then, ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT ; FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN !

May a merciful God grant us all, in our several stations, that humility, which is promised the gift of his grace ; that we may be assisted to perform our duties towards our God, our neighbour, and ourselves ; and that we may, finally, experience the blessedness promised to *the poor in spirit*, by an exaltation to THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, through the merits of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ ! to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON IX.

ST. MATT. V. 4.

Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

AT the birth of Our Blessed Saviour, the Heavenly Host, transported with joy, sang, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men^a." Pious *Simeon* hailed the sight of Christ, in the devoutest strain of gratitude: "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel^b." The rural company of shepherds, who had gone to *Bethlehem*, to see this happy event, made known to them by an Angel^c, "Returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them^d. "Mary," the mother of

^a St. Luke ii. 14.

^b St. Luke ii. 29—32.

^c St. Luke ii. 10.

^d St. Luke ii. 20.

our Lord, “ kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart^e.” *Anna*, the Prophetess, a devout woman, “ gave thanks, likewise, unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption *in Jerusalem*^f.” John the Baptist, applies to Christ’s appearance, the beautiful prophecy in Isaiah : “ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth ; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God^g.” And the wise men, when they saw the star *standing over where the young child was*, “ rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him : and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts ; gold, and frankincence, and myrrh^h.”

Yet, blessed as Christianity is in its origin, and in its progress ; and peaceful and comfortable as are all its precepts, abundant cause for mourning will occur, in the time of this mortal life, wherein our Saviour came to visit us, in great humility. We are, here, for a short time, only, and our business is to prepare ourselves for a future world, amidst much temptation, and amidst much suffering. We are to “ work out our salvation with fear and

^e St. Luke ii. 19.

^g St. Luke iii. 5, 6.

^f St. Luke ii. 38.

^h St. Matthew ii. 10, 11.

trembling¹," and we are, also, to "give diligence to make our calling and election sure^k."

As we proceed in our Christian warfare, we shall, perpetually, be reminded of the cruel effects of that fall, from the eternal punishment of which our Blessed Saviour was pleased to take, for a time, our nature upon him. Sin, with its bitter fruits, in various forms of misery, still, abounds in the world; and we are admonished that "we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God^l."

The Saviour of the world himself "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world^m," "without blemish and without spotⁿ," "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth^o;" wept, by reason of the sad effects of sin, as it appeared in the death of *Lazarus*. "Jesus wept^p." And what *are we*, "a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters^q," that *we* should be exempt from that, to which the IMMACULATE SON OF GOD was exposed!

But, what does Christianity proclaim, on this subject? Is there no light through the dark valley of human suffering? Are we, ever, to mourn as those without hope? Is grief to be the corroder of our nature; and is the demon of despair, ever, to triumph over us? No! Christianity teaches a far

¹ Philippians ii. 12.

^k 2 Pet. i. 10.

^l Acts xiv. 22.

^m St. John i. 29.

ⁿ 1 Pet. i. 19.

^o 1 Pet. ii. 22.

^p St. John xi. 35.

^q Isaiah i. 4.

better lesson. It does not insult us with false impracticable rules, nor delude us with expectations, which cannot be realized. It treats human nature as it is, and pronounces, with equal truth and mercy: "BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN, FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED!"

I shall, now, point out some of the most familiar instances of mourning, to which the blessing pronounced in the text may be, properly, applied.

First, it becomes us all to mourn for *sin*; and, as the foundation of *all sin*, to mourn, especially, for the trespass of *Adam* and *Eve*, which disgraced *them*, and tainted all their posterity. Man was created "in the image of God," and was intended for Paradise; but sin occasioned his expulsion from that happy place. Tremendous must have been the sin, in the eye of a God of infinite justice, since His INFINITE MERCY, was pleased to accept, as a satisfaction, nothing less than the blood of Jesus, "He was wounded for our transgressions:" "with His stripes we are healed." "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "It pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief." "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted." "He hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors."

Here, indeed, is subject of mourning for the sons of men. At the death of this sacred person, all

creation seemed to mourn: there was darkness over all the earth; the sun gave not its light; the earth quaked; and the rocks were rent¹. But, let us carry our thoughts to the *occasion* of these sufferings,—to *sin*, and we must mourn that *our nature*, ever, became *so corrupted from its original righteousness*. And, blessed are they who, now, mourn; for they shall be comforted, when they reflect, that, immediately as the offence was committed, and the punishment pronounced, a remedy was presented in the gracious promise,—that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head², that is, that JESUS CHRIST, the seed of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, should bruise the head, subdue the power, of the devil.

We may, next, turn our attention, *within ourselves*, where are the mournful consequences of this original sin. When passion usurps the place of reason, and plunges us deep into sins of omission, as well as of commission; when our practice, often, belies our principles, and when, in the language of our Church, “we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and have done those things which we ought not to have done,” *then*, our nature is defiled, *then*, indeed, we have cause for mourning. The image of God, graciously implanted within us, is, then, defaced; our sentiments of honour are violated; we

¹ St. Luke xxiii. St. Matthew xxvii.

² Gen. iii. 15.

are disgraced, and we are reluctant, or ashamed, to appear in the presence of God. Mourning, lamentation, and woe, are, then, our dread companions. And are we to pine and consume ourselves, in mourning, that has no other issue than the grave ? Religion inculcates a far more profitable lesson. It teaches us, indeed, that we have *sinned*; and well we may *mourn*, when we know that the original sentence of an all-just God is : “ The soul that *sineth*, it shall *die*’.” But “ this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that CHRIST JESUS, came into the world to save sinners[†].” And, how are we to be saved ? Primarily, and efficiently, by the merits of CHRIST JESUS; but, through the *means* of genuine repentance, consisting in unfeigned mourning for sins, and the most sincere resolutions of amendment, accompanied by earnest prayer to God for the gracious assistance of His Holy Spirit, without which, we can do nothing to serve God, acceptably, nor to save ourselves. If we act, unworthily, towards our fellow-creatures, there can be *no complete reconciliation*, *no restoration* to favour, without repentance : and without unfeigned repentance towards God, there can be *no salvation*. Man must *repent* ; he must be *sorry for his sins* ; he must *mourn* that he has, ever, offended his merciful Creator and Protector. And, whoever thus *mourns*, and, through faith and Divine assistance which he

[†] Ezek. xviii. 4.

^{*} 1 Tim. i. 15.

must diligently seek, turns from his sins ; BLESSED IS HE, and BLESSED will he be pronounced, when Christ judgeth the world : “ for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad ^y. ” Then, BLESSED will *they* be, that have believed in Christ, and *mourned* for their sins : FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED !

Secondly, we must mourn for the sins *of others*. How did the Psalmist mourn for others ? “ Horror hath taken hold upon me ; because of the wicked that forsake thy law ^a. ” “ I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved ; because they kept not thy word ^a. ” Hear the Apostle’s earnest aspirations on behalf of his hearers’ salvation, and think whether he would not mourn for their sins : “ God is my witness, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established ^b. ” Again : “ My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved ^c, ” that is, saved from their sins, through a saving belief in Jesus Christ. Again : “ I thank my God, upon every remembrance of you, always, in every prayer of mine for you all,

^y 2 Cor. v. 10.

^a Ps. cxix. 158.

^z Ps. cxix. 53.

^b Rom. i. 9. 11.

^c Rom. x. 1.

making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel, from the first day until now^d." And, "God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ^e," &c.

These devout aspirations and prayers, on behalf of his hearers, were, doubtless, accompanied with a sorrow for their natural wretchedness, which induced the Apostle to pour forth the most fervent supplications on their behalf: and all who so mourn for the sins and offences of their brethren, as to betake themselves in prayer to God, for their recovery from spiritual bondage, shall be comforted in this world, in the consciousness of their own generous affections; and shall, also, be comforted hereafter, with the blessing to be pronounced upon those who have laboured to save the souls of others.

Thirdly, we should mourn for public calamities. They are sent by a wise and kind Providence to work public reformation, and every individual of the community is a sufferer under them. As Christians, "we, being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another^f." And "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it^g." "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself^h."

Consider, on this occasion, the language and

^d Phil. i. 3—5.

^e Phil. i. 8.

^f Rom. xii. 5.

^g 1 Cor. xii. 26.

^h Rom. xiv. 7.

conduct of your bright and only perfect example JESUS CHRIST. In that intuitive knowledge which he possessed of the calamities impending over *Jerusalem* for the sin of rejecting Him, he exclaims, in the bitterness of mourning and sorrow : “ O! JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold your house is left unto you desolate !” Numerous, indeed, are the passages of Scripture which record the lamentations of good men, by reason of public calamities, and their successful intercession with God, on the behalf of suffering kingdoms. *Abraham* was, sorely, grieved for *Sodom*, because the sin of the inhabitants was very grievous ; and he, most pathetically and repeatedly, interceded with the Lord, to avert the judgments that hung over that devoted city¹. *Jonah*, also, a preacher of righteousness, mourned over the sins of *Nineveh*, and prevailed with the inhabitants to turn unto the Lord, to forsake their wickedness, and their city was saved from destruction². Blessed are they who thus mourn for public calamities, and turn sinners from wickedness : they shall be blessed in the comforts which they have been the honoured means of securing to others.

¹ St. Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.

² Gen. xviii.

³ Jonah iii.

Fourthly, we must mourn for private calamities, whether they befall our neighbours, or ourselves. As our neighbours are concerned, we are to “weep with them that weep,” as well as to “rejoice with them that do rejoice¹.” Our Saviour, we have observed, wept at the death of *Lazarus*, and mourned with those who were lamenting his death. Whenever he saw suffering and distress, *there*, sorrow led him to exert that Divine Power with which he cured all manner of diseases, and, even, restored to life the bodies of those who were dead, as the type of his restoring the *souls* of those, *dead in trespasses and sin*.

We, too, if we be duly influenced by the spirit of Christianity, can, never, witness distress, of body or of soul, but we shall have a fellow-feeling for the sufferer, inclining us to administer relief, whenever it is in our power, and to compassionate many miseries of others, which we cannot remove.

With respect to ourselves, we shall mourn over our calamities, not merely, as they afflict and inconvenience *ourselves*, but as they grieve those who are dear to us,—a tender parent, perhaps, or a tender wife; or some other dear relative, or friend. This Christian spirit will render us careful of our own happiness, on a far more generous motive than that of personal convenience, though *that* is not to be neglected; since, want of proper attention to ourselves, equally, incapacitates us, often, from being

¹ Rom. xii. 15.

beneficial to others, as it does from discharging our own various duties. Besides, every inconvenience that we sustain, may, justly, be considered as the fruit of *sin*, which has removed us from that happiness, for which we were intended. In this light, a Christian will mourn over his own afflictions, and, *so* mourning over them, in that religious sense, which may prevail with him to acknowledge the justice of God in all his dispensations, seeing that he is *a sinful creature*; he may, through the consolations of the Gospel, be comforted.

Sixthly, we may mourn when religion suffers; when the way of the Lord is obstructed; when *Sion* is brought low; when the Church of our Redeemer suffers injury. How was the Psalmist grieved, when he “saw the prosperity of the wicked^m,” because that prosperity would be exerted to the injury of the cause most dear to him, the cause of THE LORD OF HOSTS. How was our Blessed Saviour grieved when he witnessed the profanation of the temple, and, in indignation, “cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves.” And how may we suppose He was grieved for the injuries of religion, and violence done to God; when He, voluntarily, submitted Himself, in the purest love, to

^m Ps. lxxiii. 3.

ⁿ St. Matt. xxi. 12.

the chastisements that those injuries merited; and, from the bitterness of his soul exclaimed, while, as our Representative, he was expiating the punishments due to the wicked: "My God! my God! WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" We cannot, indeed, testify our mourning for religion's injuries to the same degree; but we may, and we ought, when heaven's laws are insulted, to show our sorrow, not by persecution of the unhappy individuals, but by giving our best encouragement to all sound learning and religious education. Jesus never persecuted: nor did he permit persecution. He appealed to the heads and hearts of his hearers, and left the result to his heavenly Father. This is the way by which we are to testify *our* sorrow, when the laws of God are insulted. There may, indeed, be cases of most flagrant injury, wantonly and indecently, offered to religion, when the magistrate should not *bear the sword in vain*^a. Such cases, when, unhappily, they occur, must be restrained by the constituted authorities; but, as individuals, let us rather, *knowing the terror of the Lord*, PERSUADE^b our mistaken brother, who, as ignorantly as wickedly, despises the Revelation of God: and, so mourning over his folly, we may, by the mercies of God, recover him, and he

^a St. Matt. xxvii. 46. St. Luke ix. 55; 56 and

^b Rom. xiii. 4.

^c 2 Cor. v. 11.

comforted in the salvation of his and our own souls.

Furthermore, we should mourn for the loss of dear friends and relations. It was, early, revealed, by the Almighty, that it was not good that "the man should be alone." The spirit of this merciful provision applies, in every subsequent period. The world is made up of many families; or persons connected by the ties of consanguinity; or of friends drawn together by some peculiar circumstances of early association, or mutual convenience. And, when the tender link is broken; when the parent becomes childless, or the child fatherless; when the husband loses his dearest friend and best companion, or the wife her protector and affectionate counsellor and supporter; when friends and acquaintances are severed by the grave, and the survivor pursues, drearily, the journey of life, *then*, mourning is proper, is natural, to the sons and daughters of men. It is mourning, proceeding from the best sympathies of our nature; and it is mourning that shall *not* be destitute of comfort. It is, only, when we do violence to our nature, and degrade it by low passion and sordid pursuits, that we treasure up mourning that shall not be comforted. But, in respect to those, whom an All-wise Providence hath been pleased to remove from the world, before

^r Gen. ii. 18.

us; if we have, only, the consolation to know that they died in the faith of Christ, we may be comforted in the well grounded hope that they have gone to be happy. We wish happiness to those we love; and, whatever may be the relation that has been cut asunder by death, the surviving mourner may become consoled in the Christian reflection, that a God of mercy will, never, fail in His promises to those who have departed this life, in His faith and fear.

It is reasonable, also, to indulge the pleasing idea, that those, who have loved each other, upon earth, may meet, again, in a better world. In the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus, it appears that the rich man, after death, saw Abraham, and Lazarus, also, whom, in the day of prosperity, he had neglected, in Abraham's bosom; and the rich man held conversation with Abraham, in a desire to prevail with him to send Lazarus on a message of love to his brethren, to warn them lest they should come to the same place of torment, in which he found himself.

Without applying this parable further than to probable conjecture respecting our future knowledge of each other; how does it, most forcibly, impress upon us, on the tenderest motives, the importance of cultivating towards each other that unfeigned love, that harmonious feeling, that generous confidence, which, being freely exercised amid

the sundry changes and chances of this mortal life, may render us meet to love, again—in a future, and a better, state! How does it admonish us to discard all reserves, to consult each other's wishes, to give and to receive mutual satisfaction, on all questionable points that might injure the tender thread of love: and so to comfort ourselves, in the pleasing idea that we *may* meet, again; and that, if such should be the pleasure of Him, who knoweth and contriveth what is best, we may meet to continue, and to perfect, that love, which commenced, in this our earthly pilgrimage!

From what has been observed, we may learn, how, in all the circumstances and relations of life, mourning, at times, is natural; but that it is, never, without its comforts. This world is not our resting place. We look to a better. In the mean time, "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth," and "the Captain of" our "salvation" was made "perfect through sufferings!" Thus, the Son of God suffered! Just men suffered! The prophets suffered! THE HOLY ARMY OF MARTYRS suffered! But all these desired "a better country, that is, an heavenly^x," and "had respect unto the recompence of the reward^y." And, "if we suffer, we shall, also, reign with Him^z," that is, with Christ in Heaven, that blessed place, where, "the weary be at rest^a," and where "they that sow in

^t Heb. xii. 6.

^u Heb. ii. 10.

^x Heb. xi. 16.

^y Heb. xi. 26.

^z 2 Tim. ii. 12.

^a Job iii. 17.

tears, shall reap in joy^b." For we know, to our great and endless comfort, that mourning is the refiner of our nature, the sign of the best sympathies with which God hath blessed us. We are assured that this world of mingled sorrow and joy shall, soon, pass away, and that "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren; be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord^c."

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons in one adorable Godhead, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, praise, might, majesty, and dominion, this day, and for ever. Amen!

^b Ps. cxxvi. 5.

^c 1 Cor. xv. 53—58.

SERMON X.

ST. MATT. V. 5.

Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.

THE most precious promises of the Gospel are made to meekness and lowliness of heart. Nothing, more clearly than this, manifests the goodness of God, who is the Author of the Gospel ; because nothing more contributes to the happiness and welfare of society, than a truly Christian temper, free from pride, and disposed to contentment.

From the nature of the promises, annexed to meekness and lowliness of heart, we are persuaded that there is nothing mean ; nothing low ; nothing unworthy of the finest sentiments that can adorn and dignify our nature, in the temper recommended. For, to *the poor in spirit*, is promised THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ! They who *mourn* are to be *comforted* ! They who *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, are to be *filled* ! The *merciful* are to obtain *mercy* ! The *peace-makers* are to be called THE CHILDREN OF GOD !

All these promises are dependant on a meek and humble disposition, to which a God of infinite justice, purity, and wisdom, hath affixed the seal of His approbation. This, alone, may satisfy us that the disposition recommended is, truly, a noble disposition ; but, if we, carefully, reflect, we shall find that meekness, properly understood, forms, more and more, within us, a soul, adapted to enjoyment, in humble dependence upon God, under all the varied and varying circumstances of life.

I shall endeavour to illustrate this truly Christian and delightful theory, by showing the advantages of meekness, as it contributes to the enjoyment proper to inheritance or possession, in different relations and circumstances, and shall, then, offer some appropriate exhortation.

First, let us consider the advantages of meekness, in prosperity. The man, who abounds in every possession of this world, that could contribute to his comfort and happiness, *may be*, and often is, *miserable*. If he do not cultivate a meek and contented mind, he will, assuredly, find himself far removed from happiness. He will be captious towards his humble brethren, apt to take offence, and backward to receive the benefit of their humble services. Of what use, then, is his wealth and large possessions, but to multiply his anxieties, and to increase his vexations? Thus, he will, gradually, contract a temper, averse from compassionating those distresses, which he *might* relieve, and will, so,

become forgetful of the benefits, to which he might render the bounty of Providence subservient. He will be unhappy in himself, and far from a blessing to those, with whom he is connected. How often do we see sad proofs of this, as we mix in the world! How frequently do we observe the rich suffering more than the anguish of *the poor*; and, instead of possessing *their* blessing, *the blessing of them that are ready to perish*, experiencing *their* murmurings! But, whatever, according to a wise and equitable Providence, may be the difference of men's conditions, very few are devoid of the *necessaries* of existence; since man wants but little, in this world. If, with that little, he has, through Divine grace, cultivated meekness of disposition, he will be happier in a state of mind, adapted to make the best of his lot, than the most opulent man, who, ungratefully, overlooks his blessings, unwisely, gives way to impatience, and suffers himself to be teased by desires, which can never be gratified.

We have a striking proof of the blessing, arising from meekness, exerted in prosperity, in the conduct of *Job*. He became afflicted and distressed, as much as he could be, from the loss of his great possessions; from being bereaved of his children, and from most humiliating disease; but, reflecting on the uses which he had, formerly, made of his wealth, to which he had been prompted, doubtless,

by, meekly, considering the sufferings of his brother of like infirmities with himself, he thus appealed to his Maker, in the midst of his affliction :

“ Did I not weep for him that was in trouble ? was not my soul grieved for the poor ? ” Again : “ If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail ; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless have not eaten thereof If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering ; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep ; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate ; then, let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone ^b. ”

This holy man, in his bitter distress, was still patient : and, in the consciousness of that meekness, which, in the season of health and prosperity, had prompted him to make the best use of his wealth, he *possessed* the earth, IN THE RICHNESS OF HIS SOUL, when he was *deprived of its treasures*. He had the satisfaction proper to this most generous, this most noble appeal :

“ When the ear heard me, *then* it blessed me ; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me ; because I delivered the poor that cried, and the

^a Job xxx. 25.

^b Job xxxi. 16—22.

fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me : and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me : my judgment was a robe and diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame^c."

Whoever, from his generous virtues, exercised, according to his condition in life, can offer this exclamation, he may, truly, be said to *inherit the earth*, and *more than the earth*; for he inherits that which will give him, under the worst circumstances, a peace, a delight which the world can neither give, nor take away. He will be, in prosperity, as the Supreme Author of good, *eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and a father to the poor*. Who, in all that is *most valuable*, can, so justly, be said to *inherit the earth*?

Consider, secondly, the advantage of meekness, in adverse circumstances. "Before honour," as we read in the Book of Proverbs, "is humility^d." To a man, who has to establish himself in life; to earn his bread by his labour, or by the exertions of his mind, meekness and humility are indispensable. But, wherever an untoward disposition prevails, there can be neither personal improvement, nor the favour of friends. The season of youth will, commonly, be neglected, and the admonitions of superiors will be disregarded. The consequence

^c Job xxix. 11—15.

^d Prov. xv. 33.

will be,—a manhood of imbecility, and, probably, of poverty.

Then, the same untoward disposition that has produced this wretchedness magnifies every want, and adds a sting to every suffering. The commands of those, to whom the proud dependant looks for support, are disregarded, wherever they can be disregarded, and the service performed is a constrained and an unwilling obedience. Though he may obtain all that he needs, and more than he needs, the man, destitute of meekness, is desirous, rather, of what is *denied* him, than satisfied with what, in a happier state of mind, he *might enjoy*.

How many cases do we witness of persons, who, meekly, consulting the interests of their employers, constitute them their friends, and raise themselves to well deserved independence; and, on the other hand, how many instances are, daily, before us, of persons who, with the best prospects, or born to a comfortable inheritance, alienate from themselves, by their pride, the affections of those who might befriend them; or who, wantonly, striving to move in a circle, to which they are not entitled, haul themselves from honourable competency to the most abject want and misery!

Here, we see the blessing attendant on meek persons; not above control, lowly enough, in themselves, to seek the friendship of those older, wiser, or richer, than they are; generously, rejoicing with them, in their superior attainments or prosperity,

and, humbly, endeavouring to tread the steps, by which others have arrived at eminence. Of such, we may, generally, adopt the words of the Psalmist ; “ I have been young, and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken ; nor his seed,” such meek followers of JESUS CHRIST, “ begging bread.”

Consider, thirdly, the advantages of meekness, *in sickness*. The humble Christian, regarding himself, as, indeed, he is, in every circumstance, under the direction of the Almighty, will, especially, when sickness presses upon him, *call upon God in that day of trouble* : He will reflect, too, on his ways, and ponder his past life. He will improve the leisure of sickness to the purposes of spiritual improvement, and of a strict communion with God. He will, meekly, acknowledge his vileness, and, humbly, solicit divine aid, that, in future, he may be preserved from every temptation. He will, earnestly, resolve to profit from the benevolent admonition he has had ; and, during the remainder of his days, to obey the commandments of God, and to approve himself the true disciple of JESUS CHRIST.

Thus, meekly acknowledging his vileness, and, as meekly, imploring divine aid, he will improve the season of sickness to the best purpose, by reforming his soul, and forwarding it in the way of godliness. He will say with the Psalmist :

Ps. xxxvii. 25. Ps. l. 15.

"Before I was afflicted, I went astray," and "it is good for me that I have been afflicted." Confessing his sins, therefore, to God, against whom he has, unhappily, transgressed, with resolutions to forsake them; he will, humbly, bow under the rod, that, in mercy, has chastized him: knowing that, "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth^b."

So meek a disposition will have sanctified his sickness, and have supported him under it, in the dignified wisdom of resignation. Whereas, the impatient, the restless, the man who can submit, quietly, to no restraint: how will every suffering of the body be increased to him! What is, infinitely, worse; how will he fail of that inward consolation which the improved chastisements of the Lord will, never, fail to convey!

Consider, fourthly, the advantages of meekness, *in health*. In that blessed state, *if wisely improved*; but in that most dangerous state to the welfare of the soul, *if consumed in thoughtlessness and levity*; every support of Godly principle, and of Christian life, will be found requisite. Temptations within, and temptations without, will, vigorously, assail the disciple of Christ; and, we know, that "the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour^c." Never is the

^a Ps. cxix. 67. 71.

^b Heb. xii. 6.

^c 1 Pet. v. 8.

feebleness of man to fulfil his most important duties more humiliating, than in the season of health. *Then*, it, especially, becomes him to ponder his path; and, meekly, to betake himself, in prayer, to the God of his salvation, that He will, graciously, vouchsafe to create a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within him¹."

And if, in an unguarded hour, he shall unhappily yield under the pressure of temptation, *then*, the faithful disciple of a meek and lowly Master should, earnestly, endeavour to repair the breach which has been made in the law of his Redeemer, by, unfeignedly, confessing his sin, and, humbly, repenting of his misdeeds. *Then*, let him, fervently, pray for God's restraining grace, in the language of holy David, a pattern of all meekness, exclaiming:—

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions: wash me, thoroughly, from mine iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me¹."

Such is the meek frame of mind, by which the sinner, who has abused the blessing of health, by inflaming his passions, and yielding to temptation, is to restore himself to the favour of God. Thus restoring himself, he may be said to inherit the

¹ Ps. li. 10.

¹ Ps. li. 1—5.

earth, since he will possess an approving conscience, more valuable to its possessor than all that this earth can afford; which will give enjoyment to whatever, under a merciful Providence, he may have of the world's goods; but, without which, no possession, however bountiful or splendid, can administer solid comfort. And, should he be destitute of every earthly possession, still the sweet consolation of knowing himself to be, through faith in Christ, and unfeigned repentance, at peace with God, will, so long as by righteous perseverance, he maintains that peace, render him, in the truest sense, an inheritor of all that is most valuable in this his earthly pilgrimage. BLESSED, in this sense, ARE THE MEEK, FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH!

I might travel through the various *conditions* of society, and the different relations of life, in all of which the advantages of meekness of temper would be conspicuous. I might, also, show its benefits, under all *circumstances*. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, are, alike, benefitted by it: the high, by making candid allowances for those in the humbler walks of life, meekly receiving their services, and, never, being extreme to mark what they think is done amiss; and the low, by quietly discharging their duty, in that humble state of life, in which it has pleased God to place them. Thus, the high and the low will make unto themselves friends; and they, alike, need friends: their wants

are mutual, as are their obligations. Thus, both may be pronounced *blessed*; since they shall, both, *inherit the earth*, that is, that state of mind, which, only, can render the earth a blessing to those who are living in it. The proud and the boisterous; the headstrong and the obstinate; the discontented and the complaining, can, never, be happy; be their possessions many, or be they few. But the meek and the lowly, the humble disciple of Jesus Christ; *he* forms his temper according to the Gospel; *he* hears the voice of his Saviour; he attends to his call, and *he* is happy: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light ^a."

May we all, then, be blessed with Divine aid from above, to pray, devoutly, for that grace, by which we may improve this our season of probation, in cultivating the heavenly virtues of lowliness and meekness; since they, in the sight of God, are of great price. These are exalting and ennobling virtues, however low they may appear, in sound: for they, really, raise us, *above the earth*, while they administer to us the best enjoyment of it. They administer that enjoyment, in the well-founded knowledge, that, should it please God, at

^a St. Matt. xi. 28—30.

any time, to take from us our *worldly possessions*, our *chief treasure* is, still, in a *higher* place. *Blessed*, then, *are the meek, who*, not only, *inherit the earth*, but are, in virtue of that meekness, applied, in the varied relations and circumstances of life, preparing themselves for their heavenly state. Let us, therefore, conclude these meditations, by, meekly, yet fervently, praying, in the excellent language of our Church :

“ Almighty and everlasting God ! who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility ; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord ^a : to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, praise, might, majesty, and dominion, this day and for ever. *Amen.*

^a Collect for the sixth Sunday after Lent.

SERMON XI.

ST. MATT. v. 6.

*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness :
for they shall be filled.*

THE religion of the Gospel is a religion of sincerity. In order that the *conduct* may be right, it is requisite that the *heart* be right. In vain, do we assume the exterior forms of religion ; in vain, are we constant at our Churches ; in vain, are we frequenters of the altar, unless our wills and inclinations direct and urge our steps. Our blessed Saviour, who is a pattern to us in all that is good, tells us that His meat was, *to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work*^a. Accordingly, we read, in the Gospel, that He, frequently, retired from the company of men to pour out His heart, in private, unto God, and continued, all night, in prayer^b.

^a St. John iv. 34.

^b St. Matthew xiv. 23. xxvi. 36. 39. St. Mark i. 35. vi. 46. xiv. 37—39. St. Luke vi. 12. ix. 28. xxii. 41.

Holy *David* had, long before the appearance of Christ, manifested the most vehement attachment to the service of God : “ I was glad,” he exclaims, “ when they said unto me ; let us go into the House of the Lord ^c.” And, “ my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord ^d.” The Apostles testified the most earnest zeal for the service of God. After our Lord’s ascension, they “ continued, with one accord, in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren ^e.” The early disciples “ continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers ^f.” St. *Paul* testified the most affectionate zeal for the salvation of his disciples : “ my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved ^g.” And he concludes his second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, as he does, also, other of his Epistles, in words of similar import, that “ the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost” might be with them all ^h. Thus, our blessed Saviour, holy *David*, and the Apostles of our Lord, all testified how they *hungered and thirsted after righteousness*.

^c Ps. cxvii. 1.

^e Acts i. 14.

^g Romans x. 1.

^d Ps. lxxxiv. 2.

^f Acts ii. 42.

^h 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

In what follows, it will be my endeavour to illustrate this subject, by some familiar application.

We should, first, *so, hunger and, so, thirst* after righteousness as, zealously, to endeavour to become righteous in our conduct. Hear how the devout Psalmist, in his prayer to God, hungered after righteousness. “With my whole heart,” he says, “have I sought thee : O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord, teach me thy statutes ⁱ.” And : “behold, I have *longed after* thy precepts : quicken me in thy righteousness ^k.”

We should imitate this pious example of earnest desire to keep the commandments of God. If we be, indeed, desirous of success, we should betake ourselves, as *David* did, to the “Father of Lights,” from whom proceeds every good gift, and every perfect gift ^l.” Then, we shall experience the BLESSING of those who HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS. We shall be filled with grace to discharge every duty : “for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh,” the door of spiritual blessing “shall be opened ^m.” But, if we trust to our own strength, and neglect to supplicate God’s assistance, we shall remain destitute of a godly

ⁱ Ps. cxix. 10—12.

^l St. James i. 17.

^k Ver. 40.

^m St. Matt. vii. 7, 8.

spirit, and shall, sadly, experience, that, while God “hath filled the hungry with good things,” “the rich,” those who, vainly, fancy themselves rich, and hunger not after righteousness, “he hath sent empty away ^a.”

Secondly, *we hunger and thirst after righteousness*, when we make the oracles of God, the Holy Scriptures, our delight; knowing that it is from them that a pure faith and righteous conduct are to be formed. Our blessed Saviour, mercifully, admonishes His disciples: “Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me^o.” His Apostle, after Him, observes: “Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning: that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope^p.” Numerous, indeed, are the passages of the Old, as well as of the New, Testament, which invite every soul that thirsts after righteousness to the Holy Scriptures. Our Scriptural Church, consistently observes: “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith^q.”

To the scriptures, then, let me, earnestly, invite every one, who wishes to know the will of God, and

^a St. Luke i. 53.

^p Romans xv. 4.

^o St. John v. 39.

^q Article VI.

to fulfil righteousness. For we must have a right faith, before we can be assured that our conduct is right, or that we please God. Indeed, “without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God, must *believe* that He is; and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him’.” Whatever, in the pride of the human heart, may be thought of the powers of reason, the important truths relating to God and our salvation, are to be known from the Scriptures, only. If we, *so*, hunger after righteousness as to make *them* our study; if we meditate on them, in the night season, and, faithfully, endeavour to obey their precepts, by the day, we shall be filled with the favour of God’s approbation, and shall be rich in the reward of those good works which have flown from an ardent desire of approving ourselves the disciples of our Lord and Saviour, JESUS CHRIST, who is to “judge the world in righteousness’,” and, *before whose Judgment seat, we shall all stand’*.

. Thirdly, we may be said *to hunger and thirst after righteousness*, when we feel within ourselves a prevailing desire to propagate the kingdom of Christ in those countries, where a Saviour is unknown. This is to act, consistently with the command given by our Saviour to His first Apostles: “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,

’ Heb. xi. 6. ’ Acts xvii. 31. ’ Rom. xiv. 10.

and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you “.” It is, also, to act agreeably to the subject of our daily petition to God ; “ THY KINGDOM COME !” Let us not, then, be deterred from so good a work, by any pretence that the Heathens, who know not Christ, may be *left to themselves*, and that they are *as well as they are*. No ! darkness is not good as light. Paganism is not good as Christianity. Nor, can we think it is, if we HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS.

How did the Apostles and first Disciples of Christ, zealously, labour to extend His kingdom upon earth ! Neither frozen regions, nor sandy deserts ; no difficulties ; no hazards ; neither perils, by water, nor perils, by land, could restrain their desire, nor their endeavour, to enlarge the dominion of their Lord. In the strongest language, St. *Paul* could exclaim, in his zeal for the salvation of the Jews : “ I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience, also, bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh*.”

Such, we see, was the Apostle’s keen affection for the prosperity of the Messiah’s reign, that, in the most powerful figure of speech, he writes as,

* St. Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.

* Rom. ix. 1—3.

altogether, insensible of his own special advantages, so he could but promote those of his brethren.

We read of others, who, through faith, “ had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy;) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report, through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

Here, we behold to what painful extremities persons, of old, who, through faith, hungered to establish the faith of Christ, which is righteousness, submitted. The application to us is to be found in the succeeding chapter.

“ Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses; let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of

God. For consider him that endureth such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds^a.”

Yes! consider the tremendous sufferings of the Son of God, who, though He “did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth^a,” still, in the bitterness of His agony, exclaimed, “my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me^b!” Reflect, that those sufferings were undergone by Him, purely, in His affectionate desire to repair the breach, which sin had made, and to establish that righteousness, which it was his *meat* to promote; because it was *the will of His Father*—and, then, *so*, hunger, yourselves, after righteousness, as to lose no opportunity to join in every commendable effort to erect the cross of Christ, in those countries, where a Saviour is, yet, unknown. Unite, heartily, in the support of Missionary labours, by rendering your assistance, if a merciful Providence hath blessed you with the means, to Societies, acting in union with the Government and the authorized spiritual Pastors of the country, and proceeding in their work with the zeal of Christians, and with the prudence becoming men, valuable for their wisdom, and estimable for their piety.

Fourthly, we *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, when we exert our most zealous endeavours to promote Christian knowledge and practice in

^a Heb. xii. 1—3. ^a 1 Pet. ii. 22. ^b St. Matt. xxvii. 46.

the country, in which we live. This we, most effectually, do, when we are exemplary ourselves; when we *let our light so shine before men that they see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven*^c.

We all profess that we love Christ. It becomes us, then, to testify our love in the way that he hath prescribed,—*by keeping his commandments*^d; and by making his conduct the pattern of our life. Whoever is anxious for the prevalence of Christ's religion in the world, will perceive the importance of good example; and will, in this respect, *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, by, *so*, loving the Lord, *with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind*^e, as to show forth that love, not in profession, only, but in the uniform tenor of a righteous life.

And having, by divine grace, formed himself into a pattern of righteousness, he will, next, be zealous in forwarding the Christian education of children; by giving his best support to all schools and seminaries of sound learning and Christian education, among the poorer classes of society. This is the best mode to rescue them from that ruin, which indigence, idleness, and consequent vice, might entail upon their immortal souls.

Of the various views given, in the Gospel, of the

^c St. Matthew v. 16.

^d St. John xiv. 15.

^e St. Matthew xxii. 37.

character of our blessed Saviour, no one is more interesting than his tender and affectionate care of children. He encourages their approach ; he blames those who would have kept them from him ; he takes them up in his arms, and pours his blessings upon them^f.

This should be a most persuasive argument with us to show our friendship to our poor brethren in Christ, who possess not the necessary means, themselves, by assisting them in the Christian education of their children. This is an important object, which will occupy the earnest attention of those, who, by the mercies of Providence, abound in what others want. Even though the nearer claims upon them may be many, and though they *should* feel some inconvenience in this application of their bounty, they will still, *so, hunger and thirst after righteousness*, that the culture of poor children, and the propagation of true religion, will claim their most charitable regards. They will imitate, so far as they are able to imitate, their Divine Lord and Master, who went about doing good ; *healing diseases*, which *may not* be in their power ; *doing good to the bodies of men*, which *is* in the power of *few, only*, and improving *the souls of men*, a kind office, to which, either by example, by precept, or by some friendly assistance, *all have some power of contributing*. Blessed are they

^f St. Mark x. 14—16.

who show that they, thus, *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, after extending the kingdom of their Redeemer : for *they* shall be filled with His benediction, when He cometh, a second time, to judge the world, and to receive to His favour those, who, through faith and good conduct, have approved themselves his disciples.

Fifthly, if we *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, we shall, devoutly, apply ourselves to prayer, public and private, and shall, often, celebrate the mercies of our Redeemer, by a faithful reception of the Holy Sacrament of His body and blood. These are the means of righteousness, graciously, appointed by God and our Saviour ; and they will be neglected by no true Christian, who will delight, in thus, having commenced with God.

With respect to *private prayer*, the whole life of the sincere Christian will be a life of prayer, and affectionate intercourse with his God. Knowing that it is to HIM he is indebted for every good thing which he enjoys ; for his creation ; for his preservation ; for the meat and drink, by which he is nourished ; for his friends and relations—in short, for every blessing of human life ; but, above all, for redemption, through Jesus Christ, he will *set the Lord always before him*^s, and, whether in company, or alone, whether working, or enjoying, with innocence, the good things,

^s Ps. xvi. 8.

abundantly, bestowed upon him, he will delight in pouring out his soul, in deprecation of offended justice, or in grateful thanksgiving to the throne of infinite mercy. He will commence the day with prayer; he will pursue it in many a secret and delightful ejaculation, and he will close it, by surrendering himself to those arms which have, hitherto, protected him, knowing that, without protection, from on high, he could not escape the perils and dangers of the night, nor be restored to a new day.

With respect to *public prayer*, he will delight in every opportunity afforded him, by a kind Providence, to enter the courts of the Lord's house: and, when present, having prayed that his mind may be preserved from wandering thoughts and distractions, he will feel, and conduct, himself, as in the presence of God. If he be, duly, impressed with the sacred truth, that it is, through prayer, that God is to be approached, and that he is to be enabled *to work out his salvation*, he will not resort to Church, only, when a sermon is to be preached; but he will attend his church, principally, for the sake of joining with the saints in prayer and thanksgiving. For, though preaching is one of the means of grace, yet it is an *inferior means* to that of prayer: and, though it will, never, be neglected by any who do, indeed, *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, yet it should, never, be pursued to the neglect of that communion with God, in prayer, which occu-

pied so much the pious attention of the Patriarchs, of the Prophets, of the Apostles and primitive Christians, and which had the sanction of our blessed Saviour, both by his precept, and by his sacred example.

With respect to THE HOLY SACRAMENT, it is lamentable, as it is strange, that any, desirous of fulfilling righteousness, should neglect this solemn means of grace, instituted and commanded by OUR BLESSED REDEEMER. It is, not only the commemoration of his sufferings, for a lost world, but it affords every faithful participant an opportunity of the most intimate communion with Christ, and with his brethren. "The cup of blessing, which we bless," says the Apostle, "is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread^h."

May all, who have neglected this holy ordinance, be blessed with grace, from above, to consider, penitently, their past ingratitude! Let them reflect, that their disobedience is not to *man*, nor to the *Church*, though *she* deserves their humble attention; but it is disobedience to "CHRIST, WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVERⁱ!" for HE gave the command: "This do, in remembrance of

^h 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

ⁱ Rom. ix. 5.

me^k." O! could many, who neglect, habitually, this command of Christ, know the heaviness, with which a recollection of the neglect, is, often, attended, on a death bed, it might be hoped, that the affectionate request of their Redeemer would not be slighted; but that it would be the study of their lives to prepare themselves for the solemn mystery; that they would delight in, frequently, approaching the altar, and *there*, in a deep sense of their guilt, joining in the excellent prayer of the Church:

"Although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice; yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service; not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

The last familiar proof which I shall mention that we *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, is, that, with a view to the interests of religion, we keep a strict, but affectionate, watch over our children, and servants, and dependants; checking every evil habit, and encouraging every righteous practice.

In particular, we shall be careful to be, ourselves, influenced by the pious resolution of good old *Joshua*: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" As the foundation of this excellent resolution; we shall use our own best endeavours to maintain good order in our respective families, by, steadily, pur-

^k 1 Cor. xi. 24.

¹ Joshua xxiv. 15.

suing the pious practice of family prayer ; and seeing that our children and servants are, constantly, present. We shall, also, make the best provision in our power, that neither our children, nor servants, nor any of our dependants, have just cause to detain them from their public duties at Church. If we are in affluence, or in any way of life that gives us command over others, we shall suspend, on Sunday, all unnecessary services from our cattle, as well as from our servants : we shall have pleasure in, kindly, making such arrangements, that our servants may have opportunity, as well as ourselves, to profit from the provisions made for public devotion and Christian edification, on this sacred day ; and, for this purpose, we shall exhort them to rise earlier, on this day, than on others, that they may, after performing the necessary business of their station, be at leisure to proceed, without distraction, to pious meditation, and devout prayer.

But, in our anxiety to instil good and righteous habits into our children, servants, or dependants, let nothing be done, harshly, nor with severity. Knowing the terror of the Lord, to all such as, wilfully, disobey Him, and dishonour Him, by thoughtlessness, or by vice, let us *persuade*^m our brethren to be wise, to fear the Lord, and to consider their latter end. And, never, until our good

^m 2 Cor. v. 11.

example, coupled with affectionate persuasion, fails, let any have recourse to compulsory expedients. *They*, seldom, succeed : they are not, however, to be omitted, when the more generous trial of entreaty has failed. We must, *then*, however reluctantly, discharge our duty.

Blessed are they who *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, in the instances which have been mentioned, or in any others which may not have been noticed ; but which may occur to the mind of the faithful disciple of Christ, anxious for the enlargement of his Redeemer's kingdom. He shall be filled with the sweet consciousness, that he has endeavoured to discharge his duty ; he shall be filled with the approbation of God and of all good men, and " with joy unspeakable and full of glory ", in that blessed region, where is his treasure, even in THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Such an one may be poor, on earth ; but he shall be rich, in faith and in good works : he will abound in that peace of mind, which this world cannot give, nor take away. He will be above all want, when this world, and its possessions shall cease to administer their wonted comforts. In the valley and shadow of death he will be supported by the " living waters °," flowing from faith, and a well grounded hope in his Redeemer, through whose

ⁿ 1 Pet. i. 8. ° Jeremiah ii. 13. St. John iv. 10. vii. 38.

omnipotent merits he shall obtain pardon, and enjoy the imperishable riches of eternal life.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, might, majesty, and dominion, this day and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON XII.

ST. MATT. V. 7.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

As Christians, we are to look to JESUS CHRIST, whose name we bear, for precept, to exalt our nature; and for example of that conduct, which, springing in ourselves from true faith, is to promote our happiness, in this world, and to qualify us for THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

"Blessed are the merciful," says this divine teacher, "for they shall obtain mercy!" And, behold how this beneficent precept was illustrated, in his own sacred example. He visited the world, in great humility; and, having assumed our nature, he, mercifully, for our sakes, submitted to the greatest sufferings. The enmity of those, whom he came to save, hurried them on, through various indignities, to the wicked and cruel act of crucifying this friend of human kind; which deed of darkness seemed, only, to bring to light the richest display of DIVINE LOVE. For, when our Saviour was hanging on the cross; when all nature seemed to frown on

that unrighteous deed; even then, mercy shone triumphant over all other mercy which had, abundantly, appeared, when THE BLESSED JESUS, who had been led, as a lamb to the slaughter, formed for his enemies a prayer, never to be surpassed in excellence: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!"

No better introduction than these words can be devised to that practical illustration of mercy which is intended in the following discourse—May the Author of every blessing shower down the riches of his mercy upon us, and *pour into our hearts*, in every relation, and in every circumstance of life, *that most excellent gift of charity*, that is, of love and mercy, *without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before him*^b!

Let us, then, show mercy, first, in the candour of our judgments on the conduct of others. Very frequently, the conduct which appears to us most exceptionable, were we duly acquainted with all the secret influences which have occasioned it, might assume a very different appearance. Here, then, let that charity freely operate which *is kind*, which *is not easily provoked*, which *beareth all things*, which *hopeth all things*.

This blessed principle, carried into the various relations, and applied to the different circumstances,

to yield up our rights to others, to be patient with others,

to be kind to others, to be gentle to others, to be lowly to others,

to be patient with others, to be patient with others, to be patient with others,

to be patient with others, to be patient with others, to be patient with others,

to be patient with others, to be patient with others, to be patient with others,

^a St. Luke xxiii. 34.

^b Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday.

^c I Cor. xiii.

of life, would abate much of its inconvenience, and might be productive of the sweetest and most extended harmony. Go, in order to encourage it, *within yourselves*, and reflect how often *you* have been misunderstood, and how frequently you have been pained at the misinterpretation of your motives by worthy persons; how, perhaps, you may have been, more pungently, distressed, when you have sought anxiously, but sought, in vain, to offer a satisfactory explanation, or to obtain attention to one. *Then*, you will know how truly, in this instance, it may be observed: BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL! blessed are they who copy their Saviour, who was *never extreme to mark what was done amiss*; with whom there was forgiveness that he might be feared^d, who imputed the cruelties of His murderers, even, to ignorance of what they were about, and who, in His bitterest agonies, mercifully, prayed for them. The spirit of this prayer, from the friend of the world; from THE BLESSED JESUS, OUR REDEEMER, shall, whenever it is exerted, by fallen man, bring down upon him the blessings of heaven; and HE SHALL OBTAIN MERCY!

Secondly, let us show mercy, by relieving the distresses of the poor. We are all of one family, and should pity each other, as brethren. They, to whom a bountiful providence hath granted many blessings, should apply them in administering many

^d Psalm cxxx. 4.

comforts, to those to whom the same Providence hath been less abundant, for the wisest and best purposes, doubtless. It is for *us*, if we are rich, to improve the opportunity, mercifully, afforded us, by dealing bread to the hungry, clothing to the naked, or money to the destitute. And this is to be done, with prudence and discretion—neglecting none, who, really, need our assistance; but, especially, distinguishing those, whose lives have been such as are proper to pious Christians. Many of this sort must be known to those, who abound in what others want—many, who keep their wants, as much as they can, to themselves—and who have, commonly, far better claims upon our bounty than the wandering beggar—who is, often, more vicious than he is poor—who has been notorious, perhaps, for every crime in his own parish, and been the seducer of others from regular and praise-worthy habits of industry. Besides, in this country, where honest industry, rarely, misses remuneration, and where provision is made for the really helpless and destitute, such wanderers can, seldom, be encouraged without injury to society—because, by encouraging them, countenance is given to a wandering system—which produces, among the poorer classes of society, much more misery than any accidental liberality can relieve. They, therefore, who are blessed with the good things of Providence, will do well to seek out for modes of distributing their bounty, in a way that can do no injury.

Few, if they be not, thus abundantly, favoured by Providence, are in such indigent circumstances but they may find some opportunity to relieve the necessities of their brethren. The season of health, when duly improved, will, often, enable the working man to be a real blessing to his poor neighbour, in the time of sickness, by imparting of his scanty store : or, what is, frequently, of not less advantage, by some friendly manual assistance, or superintendence of his little concerns. God, who is loving to all, is kind in, thus, enabling, even the poorest, to be of real comfort, often, to their poor brethren.

Nor, let it be thought that the *poor* man is without an opportunity of showing mercy to the *rich*, in the ordinary course of life. Every faithful service, steadily performed, on a generous Christian principle, is a mercy to *him*, to whom it is performed, and, essentially, promotes *his* comfort. The generous soul, anxious to do more, may, secretly, lament that more cannot be done ; but, independently of any personal advantage accruing from faithful service, the poor, but humble, disciple of *a poor and humble master*, will derive the sweetest consolation from reflecting, that, in every faithful service, he is contributing to the happiness of society, in general ; and, in particular, to that of the individual to whom the service is rendered. The Apostle, St. *Peter*, observed to a poor man, who had asked alms of him ; “ Silver and gold

have I none; but such as I have, give I thee*." He gave him of the RICHES OF CHRIST, in the miracle, by which He rescued him from his lameness. And if we, in our respective circumstances, give of what we have, whether in money, in food, in charity, in advice, in medicine, or in kind and faithful service, we show mercy, according to our ability: we are, "followers of God as dear children" of God, who "is good to all," whose tender mercies are over all his works[†]; and we SHALL OBTAIN MERCY.

Thirdly, we are merciful when we, kindly, as God hath blessed us with the means, support public institutions, intended for the relief of the distressed. In this happy country, various institutions of this kind, exist. There are hospitals for the lame and the diseased, and for every sad calamity, to which this our frail nature is subjected. There are societies for visiting and assisting the sick, at home; for administering comfort to poor married women; for propagating Christianity, at home and abroad; for relieving pecuniary distress. There are refuges for the destitute, and penitential asylums for those, who are ashamed of the sins, into which they have been tempted, or who have fallen, through their own corruptions, and are desirous to reform. In short, there is not, perhaps, in the catalogue of human vice or misery, a single wretchedness, to avert or to mitigate which, there exists not some public

* Acts iii. 6.

† Eph. v. 1.

‡ Ps. cxlv. 9.

provision. These are all acts of great mercy; on the part of the founders and contributors: and they who support them *shall obtain mercy.*

Many an honourable man or woman, in humble life, has recourse to these receptacles, kindly opened to the applicant, who could not obtain adequate assistance, from any *private* source. Indeed, such are the order and wisdom, with which the affairs of some of these public institutions are administered, that the poorest person can obtain, in them, that prompt and unceasing attention, which the richest individual, often, cannot command at home: and very many are the instances of cure from maladies, under which, otherwise, suffering and misery must have continued. Other institutions, not intended, immediately, for *bodily relief*, still, afford such substantial benefits, either by the grant of money, or by offering temporary and necessary protection; that riches cannot be, more usefully, employed, than when such blessed institutions are, cheerfully, benefitted by the readiest and most liberal support. Many of these institutions do not, indeed, tend directly, to any corporeal relief; but they are adapted to promote the better concerns of the soul, and the best interests of society, by diffusing religious knowledge, and laying the foundation of Christian perfection.

All these may be considered as among the blessed results of Christ's beneficent doctrine: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one

another ~~is~~ not, indeed, that the commandment was strictly new; but, in virtue of the superior benevolence of Christ's precepts, it acquired a prominence that it possessed not before. It was reserved to the happy day of Christ's reign to establish hospitals and infirmaries. These were unknown before our Redeemer visited the earth, to *benefit the earth*: and, BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL who support them! They, thus, become, often, feet to the lame, eyes to the blind, a refuge to the disconsolate, a shelter to the destitute, competence to the poor, instructors of poor and helpless children, preachers of the Gospel, in distant climes, the promoters of Christ's kingdom, upon earth, and, verily, they shall have their EXCEEDINGLY GREAT REWARD; the reward of a generous satisfaction, in witnessing the good which they, imitating the blessed Jesus, in whom they believe, do to the bodies and souls of men. THEY HAVE SHOWN MERCY, AND THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY!

Fourthly, we are merciful, when we forbear to require from our dependants more than they can, conveniently, render us, by their services. Some are of so willing and obliging a nature; so grateful for the protection they receive, and for their daily bread to the master or mistress, from whom, under God, they receive it, that they will injure themselves, by the freeness of their labour. Wherever this is observed, the merciful man will, kindly,

check the willing dependant in his honourable exertion. He will, also, be merciful to him, in the season of sickness, and when his strength fails. Then, the accustomed remuneration will not be withholden: it will, rather, be *exceeded*; and the generous master or mistress will pour in "oil and wine," that is, will administer whatever may be thought necessary to a restoration of health.

And, whatever services may be rendered by the *poor* man, will be, liberally, remunerated by the *merciful*. The rich, considering that all they have is from God, will, freely, impart of what they have received, influenced by the spirit of Christ's precept, that "the labourer is worthy of his hire." The merciful man will not, narrowly, consider for how small a sum the duties required might be obtained from others; but, provided they be, well and faithfully, performed, he will go as far as prudence will allow in their reward.

If a doubt should, ever, arise in his mind, as to the propriety of *the manner*, in which the services are performed, or should he, even, think that they are *neglected*; he will make *the most candid allowances*, and be most careful, never, unnecessarily, to wound the mind of him, who has daily bread to earn, by giving way to *unfounded suspicions*. This is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and is far from the character of a merciful man, who will

St. Luke x. 34

St. Luke x. 7

judge, with equity ; knowing that he, also, has One in heaven, to whom he is to render services, and whose mercy, as it is over all His works, should also, influence the hearts of all who stand in need of *His mercy*.

Finally, the *merciful man is merciful to his beast*. No good-natured man can reflect without horror on the wanton hardships and cruelties imposed, sometimes, on the animate, irrational, part of the creation, by the ignorant, or the unthinking, or the unfeeling. However irrational, we have every cause for assurance, that dumb animals are, corporeally, sensible of suffering as we are, ourselves, and should, therefore, have the same tender regards from *us*, as we should, certainly, desire from *them*, were our situations reversed, and were *they* possessed of reason and a superiority of power.

The ways are various by which men may torture these helpless animals. Sometimes, they are tortured, by being hurried beyond their natural speed, to gratify the wanton thirst of play, and to encourage gaming, the prevailing foible, among those who know not how to employ their time. Sometimes, they are tortured, by the necessary supply of food being withholden from them, in their confinement. This may occur, through forgetfulness, as well as through *culpable indifference*, to their wants. Sometimes, they are tortured by cruel usage from the ill-disposed, and by manual inflictions of severity, for no offence. This is the saddest

species of cruelty towards these helpless unoffending creatures, and is *without the shadow of excuse*.

One would think that beings, who have been mercifully, endowed with the powers of reason, who are, themselves, sensible of the sufferings incident to flesh and blood, would need no dissuasive from unprovoked cruelty. But the fact is, unhappily, otherwise. Let, therefore, all consider that they are, themselves, treated with kindness by the great Creator of this world, and of all that it contains, animate or inanimate, rational or irrational; but that there is an, infinitely, greater distance between God and *the most exalted man*, than there is between *the humblest man* and *the most inferior animal*; and that if we are, in any respect, *followers of God*, whose mercy is showered on the just and on the unjust, we shall be kind and merciful to those useful animals, over which A GRACIOUS God hath been pleased to grant us a power, for *our benefit*, and not for *their abuse*.

I shall mention but one other instance wherein mercy may be shewn—and that is, *in the midst of judgment*. When, from the weakness and corruption of human nature, of which we all partake, it becomes necessary to punish the perpetrator of wickedness: *then, remembering that we, also, are "compassed with infirmity,"* let us, while we

¹ Heb. v. 2.

castigate the *offence*, pity the *offender*. By the mildness of our conduct, in the infliction of punishment, the sinner may be, tenderly, impressed, and be converted from the error of his ways; while harshness and severity, can, only, *harden* him in his wickedness, and *enrage* him against the insulted laws.

In this Christian country, there is, indeed, little necessity for dwelling on the duty of mildness towards offenders. It is, happily, felt, and, more happily, practised. If we direct our attention to the high powers, to whom is entrusted the execution of our laws against criminals, the tenderness and the reluctance with which they discharge their solemn duties, are very conspicuous; and it is well known, how, very generally, the severity of the judge relaxes, in Christian efforts to save and to reform any criminal, in whose case there shall appear hopes of improvement. Very many are the instances of most humane interference in behalf of unhappy persons, who have forfeited their liberty, or their lives to the injured laws of their country; and the happy results, sometimes, seen, in a well ordered subsequent life, are sufficient to stimulate to a continuance of the same beneficent exertions.

Let, also, the like tenderness prevail, in all minor instances of offence and punishment. Let us never, in any case, be extreme to mark what is contrary to our wishes. Let the spirit of Christ's

Holy Religion, founded in love and humility, ever regulate us, in those scenes of life, where we and our brethren are likely to disagree as to the limits of what is right, or what is wrong. "A soft answer," let us remember, as *Solomon* justly observes, "turneth away wrath^m." In the midst of our judgments, then, let us remember mercy. We shall, so, bring down blessings upon society, by the diffusion of harmony, and the establishment of peace: we shall bring down blessings upon ourselves, by securing the mercy of heaven, which is promised to the merciful, only. But, as has been, eloquently, observed;—"to him that refuses to practise mercy, upon earth, the throne of mercy, hereafter, will be inaccessible, and the Saviour of the world has been crucified, in vainⁿ."

May we all, then, prepare ourselves for the blessing promised, in the text, by showing mercy, continually, according to our several circumstances and relations; in the candour of our judgments and the moderation of our censures; in relieving the distresses of the poor; in supporting, according to our ability, all public institutions, designed for relief of the distressed; in, tenderly, forbearing to require from our dependants more than they can, conveniently, render us, by their services; in kindness to the irrational part of the creation, and in, never,

^m Prov. xv. 1.

ⁿ Dr. Samuel Johnson.

inflicting punishment, when punishment may be necessary, without pain, and a desire to reform the offender.

It is left to the reader, who is intent to fulfil the law of the Gospel, to supply any deficiency in the foregoing recapitulation. Let, only, the *principle* be *felt*; and it will be *applied*. Let it be *applied*; and we shall have *our trespasses forgiven, as we have forgiven them, who have trespassed against us*. The Judge of the world will plead for us, and will secure to us the full benefit of that meritorious atonement, which HE, in much mercy, hath made for the sins of all who, truly, believe in Him; who, unfeignedly, repent of their sins, and who are "followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love as Christ, also, hath loved us^o," to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, might, majesty, and dominion, this day and for ever. *Amen.*

^o Eph. v. 1, 2.

SERMON XIII.

ST. MATT. V. 8.

Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.

PURITY of heart is the necessary foundation of purity of conduct, and is essential to that "holiness, without which" as the writer to the Hebrews observes, "no man shall see the Lord".

Motives of personal interest ; deference to the opinions of mankind ; regard to character, may operate to restrain many within the external rules of propriety ; but nothing short of purity of heart can make us victorious over the numerous temptations, with which we shall be assaulted, nor render us, in the trying scenes of life, acceptable to God, or useful to man.

Our blessed Saviour teaches the great importance of purity of heart towards God, when He observes : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy mind^b,"

^a Heb. xii. 14.

^b St. Matt. xxii. 37.

and he shows its equal importance towards men, when He teaches : “ Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” “ On these two Commandments,” he adds, “ hang all the law and the Prophets ^c.”

Our Divine Lawgiver, more amply, illustrates the necessity of *inward purity*, when He teaches that men may be guilty of moral impurity without committing the act ^d. How should this caution, coming from One, who knew well what was in man, and who came into the world to enlighten it, by His holy example, as well as by His infallible doctrine, prompt us to look, *within*; to examine ourselves, sincerely; and, earnestly, to pray to the throne of grace, as we meditate on each commandment of the law, or of the Gospel; “ Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law !”

Let us, then, seriously, consider the most familiar cases, wherein, as disciples of JESUS CHRIST, we are to manifest purity of heart. This, accompanied by appropriate exhortation, will be the subject of the following Discourse.

First, let us manifest purity of heart, towards God, by cultivating an unfeigned love of HIM, as the foundation of obedience to His commandments, “ If ye love me,” saith Jesus Christ, “ keep my commandments ^e.” Whom we love, we, naturally,

^c St. Matt. xxii. 39, 40.

^d St. Matt. v. 28.

^e St. John xiv. 15.

desire to please; and no method is so sure to please as that of fulfilling another's wishes. Children, who love their parents, reverence their instructions, and comply with their directions. But, we are all children of God: and, if we do, indeed, love Him, we shall testify that love by obedience to His commandments.

If we go, cursorily, through the Commandments, given us by God, we shall perceive that purity of heart towards Him, will incline us to keep them.

“Thou shalt have no other Gods before me¹,” is the first Commandment. They, who are pure in their love to God, reflecting on His infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, can, never, so far violate this commandment as to hold any other being in competition *with Him*; much less can they have *any other Gods before Him*.

The second commandment is: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments².”

¹ Exodus xx. 3.

² Exodus xx. 4—6.

A pure heart towards God, to whom we know that we are indebted for our creation, for our preservation, and for all the blessings of this life; from whose bounty flows all that can sweeten human life, or support our hopes of future bliss, will preserve us from bowing to, or worshipping, any graven image, however we might be tempted to fall into such guilt, from a vain idea of, thereby, fixing our attention, in a superior degree, upon the God whom we adore. It is enough for us to know that the act of making the likeness of any thing that is in heaven, above, or in the earth, beneath, or in the water, under the earth, so as to *bown down to*, and *worship*, it, is forbidden by the Lord our God; and, if we be pure in heart towards Him, we shall love Him, too unfeignedly, to transgress this commandment, under whatever fallacious pretext of serving him better.

The third commandment is: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God, in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain ^h."

Purity of heart towards that INFINITE MAJESTY, to which all mankind are subject; towards God, who knoweth our wants, before we prefer them, and is more ready, at all times, to hear and relieve our necessities, than we are to make them known unto him, *must* render us *sincere* in our

^h Exodus xx. 7.

addresses to him, and preserve us from vain and unmeaning invocations of his ALMIGHTY ASSISTANCE. We shall not presume to petition for divine grace, unless we are resolved to co-operate with it: nor shall we ask for pardon of our sins, if we are determined to continue in them. As to profane cursing and swearing, in ordinary conversation, this is so flagrant, so scandalous, a breach of the reverence due to God, whose name is great, above all names, that the practice is, altogether, as inconsistent with love towards God, as it is at variance with purity of heart towards that great Being, at whose name, our souls, as well as our knees, should bow in reverence.

The fourth commandment is: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it¹."

The ground, upon which this commandment was, originally, given to sanctify Saturday, the seventh day of the week, was, that the Jews might pre-

¹ Exodus xx. 8—11.

serve in their memory that God, in six days, created the heaven and the earth; the sea, and all that in them is, and that He rested on that day. This commandment was, afterwards, renewed, by reminding them that God brought them out of the land of Egypt^k, and released them from their slavery.

This reason, or, perhaps, both reasons united, prevailed with them to keep this commandment, and, still, does prevail with them to keep it, in much strictness. The still higher ground upon which, we, *Christians*, regard Sunday, the first day of the week, *then*, worshipping God as the creator of the world; also, as he is a father and deliverer, by JESUS CHRIST, our Lord, who, upon the first day of the week, arose from the dead, as the first fruits of our resurrection, completing our deliverance from sin, the worst of bondage; should prevail with us to pay the strictest obedience to the commandment. We should, not only, rest, on this day, from our ordinary labours, as far as we can; but, in the purity of our hearts and the sincerity of our wishes, to become acceptable to God, we should dedicate the day, peculiarly, to His service, and to the promotion of our salvation, by prayer, by reading and hearing the word of God, and by, devoutly, partaking, of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. A heart pure towards God,

^k Deut. v. 15.

will delight to be *so* employed, and will become, more and more, purified through the blessing of God upon the prescribed means of improvement.

“ Honour thy father, and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee¹,” is the next commandment.

Purity of heart, *towards our parents*, may, at first, be supposed to be the ground of obedience to this commandment, rather than purity of heart, *towards God*. But, when we consider that this, as well as every other commandment, is given BY GOD; and that it is to HIM we, *first*, owe obedience, it will be plain that whoever is pure in heart towards God, will be so towards his father and his mother; especially, as it is to GOD that children are to elevate their view, even for the blessing which they enjoy of having earthly parents continued to them, as their best friends and their kindest guides, under heaven, through the difficulties and trials of this their pilgrimage.

“ Thou shalt not kill^m,” is the next commandment. Here, also, considering that this commandment is given by God, if we be pure in heart towards Him, we shall, therefore, keep it. When, too, we reflect that God created man, in His own image, and that, throughout the revelation of His will, with which he hath blessed us, he hath inculcated love towards our fellow-creatures, *then*, far from

¹ Exodus xx. 12.

^m Exodus xx. 13.

committing violence on their bodies, we shall be ready, on all occasions, to do them any good that may be in our power.

The next commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” comprehends an obedience, most pure and beneficial in its effect. It extends to the practice of that purity, among the sons and daughters of men, which we are warranted in concluding, from all we can know of God, by divine revelation, constitutes *His* will, and which purity is to qualify us for the kingdom of heaven, into which nothing impure, or unholy, can enter. Suppose, indeed, that the adulterous and impure could enter that holy place, they would be, altogether, without enjoyment; seeing that they could, there, meet with nothing agreeable to their corrupted habits and unclean pursuits.

Again, “Thou shalt not steal,” is a commandment that will, never, be violated by him, who, humbly, trusts to God for a blessing on his own honest endeavours to provide the necessities of subsistence, and whose heart is so pure in dependance upon God, as to be satisfied with that portion of good things which His wise providence has assigned him.—*Having food and raiment, he will be therewith, content*^p, and, in purity of affection towards God, who hath given the precept, he will keep his hands, from all picking and stealing. The same

ⁿ Exodus xx. 14.

^o Exodus xx. 15.

^p 1 Tim. vi. 8.

purity of heart, extended to his neighbours, will, also, preserve him from the breach of the following commandment ; from *bearing false witness against his neighbour ; from all evil speaking, lying, and slandering.*

The pure love of God will, moreover, withhold us from yielding to any temptation to break the last commandment, which prohibits the coveting our neighbour's house, or any thing that is his. Firmly believing that every one hath his station, and his circumstances, under divine providence ; purity of heart, towards God, will restrain us from any disposition to disturb that arrangement, and will prompt us all, devoutly, to pray, " Lord have mercy upon us ; and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee !"

Having, thus, considered how purity of heart, towards God, is the proper foundation of our discharging the duties which he hath given us, in the ten commandments, it is not necessary to show, more than has been done, as the several commandments have come before us, how the duties to our neighbour flow from a pure heart, and a disinterested love of God. Loving God, from the heart, we shall, consequently, obey His commandment, by *loving our neighbour as ourselves*, and by letting our unfeigned love of Him be the foundation of all that is just towards Him. Our BLESSED SAVIOUR, who came into the world to perfect righteousness, and His Apostles after Him, insisted upon the love of our brethren, as the chief of Christian duties.

Purity of heart towards God and our neighbour should incline us, therefore, both to obey the will of God, and to do what is just unto all men, in our various relations—as parents or children, as husbands or wives, as masters or servants, or in whatever other relation we may be.

But, further, it is most important to remember, as a guide to our life, that the pure in heart are pure *towards themselves*. Considering that this world is but the prelude to another, and that our main business, while God, mercifully, permits us to continue in it, is *so* to purify our hearts and affections, that we may become, through the atonement of JESUS CHRIST, qualified for the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, it will be our chief desire to acquire those habits and dispositions, which may render us meet to appear before God, whenever we may (how shortly we know not!) be summoned to quit this world. Let us, then, be careful to act, as in the constant presence of God, who, is of too pure eyes to behold iniquity. BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART: FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD! none, indeed, but the pure can have pleasure in seeing God. Evil and impure persons shun His presence, and cannot partake of the blessing promised. Like *Adam*, when he had yielded to sin; who would have hid himself among the trees of the garden⁹, and escaped from the presence of his offended

⁹ Gen. iii. 1.

Maker, every sinful person, while he continues in sin, and practises impurity, forfeits the blessing of the pure and righteous person, who delights in the law of God, and would be placed in His presence, at His right hand, where pleasures flow, for evermore.

The pure in heart will, also, avoid all guile and deceit, and, most strictly adhere to truth, in their thoughts, their words, and their deeds. We may deceive others ; we may deceive ourselves ; but we cannot deceive God. " Liars " are ranked among " the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters," who, as we read, " shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone '." All these are far from the blessing promised in the text.

Furthermore, the pure in heart will avoid all hypocrisy, in religion. Whatever they do, in this sacred concern, will be done from a heart, unfeignedly, pure towards God. Nothing will be done, through strife or vain-glory ; nor to serve a party ; nor from any other motive than the unsophisticated love of God. Our religion will, therefore, be, altogether, *from the heart*—it will be practised, *in private* ; it will be the guide of our conduct, and be seen, rather, in the general good deportment of our lives, than in any external professions, and

popular boastings.—In this respect : BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART,—they, who, when no human eye sees them, see their God, in faith, and are employed, in devout aspirations for His grace. *They* will proceed from strength to strength ; and the life of God, being visible to themselves in their own souls, they will enjoy a sweet foretaste of that joy, which will be the portion of the righteous, when they shall be admitted to reign with Christ, through His merits, in the kingdom of His Father. Wherefore, their religion, resting on the sure foundation of faith and prayer, will be manifested in the purest and most zealous endeavours to cleanse themselves from all evil inclinations, and to mortify all ignoble lusts and passions ; that they may, through the merits of their Redeemer, be found fitting to enter the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM : for “ there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie : ”

But, after the best endeavours, none can be so pure in heart as to be free from the power of temptation, nor from the liability to sin. And, if it shall, unfortunately, occur that, through sudden surprise, sin is committed, *then*, we shall, naturally, *shun the presence of the Lord*. And is there, *then*, no hope ? Are we to remain shut out from the view and favour of the Almighty ? Are we, never, to see Him, in peace, who created us ;

who hath, kindly, supported us, and, in whose presence, we are assured, is fulness of joy? Yes! the Christian religion teaches us a better lesson of comfort. If our souls have been, habitually, pure towards God; if, when we have, unhappily, fallen, we have, secretly, lamented our fall; if we have, humbly, confessed our sins unto God; if we have prayed for his pardon and grace, and, earnestly, resolved, by the future innocency of our life, and the constancy of our faith, to endeavour to glorify His great and holy name, *then*, we may hope that, for Christ's sake, our sin will be pardoned. *Then*, we may take comfort, that our pollution is washed away in the blood of the Lamb of God, and *that*, through the merits of His cross, our sin is buried in the grave of Him that died for us, and *that it* will, never, never, rise up in judgment against us. For you know, to your great and endless comfort, that, "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive^t." You know, too, that, if you obey the voice of the Lord; "Wash you, make clean;" if you "cease to do evil, and learn to do well;" *then*, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool^u." You know, also, that your Saviour and His Apostles preached repentance for

^t Ezekiel xviii. 27.^u Isa. i. 16—18.

the remission of sins. And your Saviour, kindly, invites you, and invites all: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden;" that is, labour and are heavy laden with the burden of the law, and with sin; "and I will give you rest^x." Wash, then, away your sins, by faith in Christ, and by unfeigned repentance; and, then, let your purity be the proof of your faith. Remember how *St. James* argues: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" The answer is plain: "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone^a." If, then, we wish to see God in peace, let not our faith be an empty, unmeaning faith; but let it be followed by good works, that is, by righteousness and holiness, generally; and, especially, by purity of heart towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves, in whatever relation of life we may be placed. *Then*, we shall be happy in the approbation of our consciences, and blessed with the favour of that God, who beholdeth the righteous, in mercy. *Then*, we may, through Christ, our Great High Priest, the alone Mediator between God and man, hope to be admitted to the vision of that God, from whose presence our sins had cast us; who will have mercy on the penitent, and will raise up, in health, the wounded soul. Blessed, as par-

^x St. Matt. xi. 28.

^a St. James ii. 14. 17.

doned sinners, we shall be admitted into the kingdom of heaven : and, in the presence of God, we shall delight in singing with angels and all the host of heaven : “ Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever ^b.”

^b Rev. v. 13.

SERMON XIV.

ST. MATT. V. 9.

Blessed are the peace makers : for they shall be called the children of God.

THE peaceable nature of Christ's religion was, beautifully, prefigured, by the prophet *Isaiah*. Foretelling, many hundred years before the birth of our blessed Saviour, the period of Christ's kingdom, he declares that, *then*, " they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks ; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more ^a."

In proportion as the blessed principles of Christianity have been acted on, peace has prevailed, in all public and private concerns. It is by harshness ; by pride ; by obstinacy ; by proneness to mark what is done amiss, and by eagerness to take offence, which are dispositions at variance with the precepts of the gospel, that peace is violated. But they, who follow the example of their Lord and

^a Isa. ii. 4.

Saviour ; who learn of Him to be “ meek and lowly in heart ^b,” *they* will pursue peace, themselves, and will study to be the promoters of it, wherever their influence can extend.

Our blessed Saviour said, indeed, on one occasion, to His disciples : “ Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I came not to send peace, but a sword ^c ;” but He said this, in that knowledge, which HE possessed, that the Jews and Heathens would, cruelly, persecute his person, and, violently, reject the blessed principles of his religion, all of which are mild, gentle, and benevolent. He said it, also, we may suppose, in foreknowledge of the discord that would prevail, in the early ages of Christianity, among families, from one part embracing the Gospel, while another part would, strenuously, retain the doctrines of the Jews, or of the heathens : and, so, *that, which* was intended as the Olive branch, or emblem of peace—the precious gospel of JESUS CHRIST—would become, among those of the same blood and kindred, the signal of the bitterest contentions. Plainly, therefore, the sword, when it is unsheathed, is the accidental event, and not the intentional effect, of the gospel. At the birth of Christ, the delighted angels sang : “ Glory to God in the highest, and, on earth peace, good will toward men ^d.” Through-

^b St. Matt. xi. 29.

^c St. Matt. x. 34.

^d St. Luke ii. 14.

out a life of the severest privations, Christ practised peace. "When He was reviled," He "reviled not again," but suffered, patiently. "He is brought" for our sakes, and our example, too, "as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth^c." His precious legacy to his disciples was, "peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you^e." The whole world is prone to violence. Slavery and oppression prevail, wherever the blessed principles of Christianity are unknown and unpractised. These vanished when *the day spring from on high visited us*, "to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death," and "to guide our feet into the way of peace^b."

In what follows, I shall state the leading particulars, whereby we may entitle ourselves to the character of PEACE MAKERS, and, so, become qualified for the honour of being esteemed among THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

First, we may be considered as *peace makers*, when, if, by the providence of God, we are called to administer the affairs of government, we study to pursue peace, at home, and abroad. If the rulers of a country be, turbulently, disposed; if, as novices, they be elated with pride at their dignified stations; if they consider themselves too

^c 1 Pet. ii. 23.

^f Is. liii. 7.

^e St. John xiv. 27.

^b St. Luke i. 79.

exalted to listen, patiently, to the voice of the people, however respectfully, preferred; and, if they disdain, affectionately, to consider whether their wishes can be granted, *then*, the sedition of the people may be deemed the act of imprudent governors, and the governors are the fomenters of the disturbances which nothing but conciliatory measures can quell.

But, generally, the reverse of this is the fact. The people are *their own* disturbers. The majority are, commonly, ill disposed to peace, and inimical to peaceful principles. The superior education, and the clearer insight into the affairs of the state, which the higher ranks, ordinarily, possess, render them the best judges of what is fitting for the people, and history admonishes us that advice is, principally, requisite to the people, who are *to obey rulers*, as those who are set over them by the Lord. "Let every soul," saith St. Paul, "be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation¹." Thus, there is a mutual obligation upon rulers, and persons *to be ruled*, to cultivate principles of kindness; and upon both, in their own station, to study the promotion of peace.

But rulers are, moreover, under *an especial ob-*

¹ Romans xiii. 1, 2.

ligation to study peace, *abroad*, that is, to use their best endeavours to preserve their country from the calamities of war, and to secure with foreign countries, as well as at home, unity, peace, and concord. This they will best do, by endeavouring, principally, in whatever they do, in their high commanding station, to “do all to the glory of God^k,” and, in freedom from all party views, to advance the honour, the happiness, the prosperity, of the kingdom, whose affairs they are to administer.

Secondly, whatever our rank or condition in life is, we may be considered as PEACE MAKERS, when we study, by prayer, and serious reflection, to cultivate Christian tempers; tempers, averse from pride, and disposed to make candid allowances, in all the trying circumstances of this mortal life. It is impossible to mix in society, and to be free from the occurrence, often, of doubtful and perplexing cases. The persons, whom we are engaged with, may, with the most amiable intentions, be mistaken, themselves, or may take different views of any particular transaction. We should, therefore, labour to acquire a temper of candour and conciliation, that we may not, because we find persons thinking differently from ourselves, be at variance with them; but may think that *we*, too, *may be* wrong, and that the forbearance, which *we* expect, it is *our* duty to practise towards others.

^k 1 Cor. x. 31.

Feeling this, and knowing that it is God, who can “*order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men*,” who is “*the author of peace and lover of concord*” ; the peace maker will pour out his soul, frequently, to the throne of grace, that he may become blessed with the virtues of the good of his Redeemer ; that he may, by meekness and mildness of disposition, be a blessing unto all, to whom he is connected : and, as the true child of God, may become the happy instrument of diffusing, among his brethren, the order and harmony conspicuous in all the works of his heavenly Father.

Thirdly, we may be considered as *peace makers* when we study to promote spiritual peace and union in the Church, and to check, in our own examples, and with whatever influence we have, needless schism and separation. The spirit of the gospel is peace, in its most comprehensive sense including humility, love, and concord of opinion. Of this, no considerate person, who reads the New Testament, with an honest heart, to discover his duty, can be insensible.

In the fifteenth chapter of the gospel according to St. *John*, our blessed Saviour, expressly, commands his disciples : “ This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you ” .

¹ Collect for the fourth Sunday after Easter.

² The second Collect for Peace.

³ St. John xv. 12.

the seventeenth chapter He plainly asserts; " This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent^o." A few verses following, having prayed to His Father, that His disciples might be preserved in the unity of the faith, in these words, " Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are^p," He proceeds, at the twentieth verse, to enlarge His prayers towards all other Christians, wheresoever dispersed.

19. " Neither pray I for these alone; but for those which shall believe on me through their word :

20. " That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us : that *the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

21. " And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them : that they may be one, even as we are one :

22. " I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one : and *that the world may know that thou hast sent me,* and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

23. " Father, I will that they, also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me : for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

" O righteous Father ! the world hath not

^o St. John xvii. 3.

^p St. John xvii. 11.

known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me:

“ And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them^a. ”

These words, containing the most affectionate prayer and earnest wishes of our Lord for unity among His disciples, were uttered, when He was about surrendering Himself to be cruelly intreated, that He might become an expiatory victim for the sins of the world. For, “ when Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook *Cedron*, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples. And *Judas*, also, which betrayed Him, knew the place^r, ” and soon approached Him, with a band of men, and officers, and betrayed Him.

When we direct our attention to this solemn period, at which our blessed Lord was on the point of shedding His blood for us; when we consider that the ground on which He, then, prayed, earnestly, for unity among His disciples, was, *that the world might believe that God had sent Him*, every feeling of love and of gratitude towards our greatest benefactor, and every motive of sound policy for the due course of the Gospel, should impress upon us the absolute necessity of, diligently, striving to maintain religious peace among ourselves.

^a St. John xvii. 20—26.

^r St. John xviii. 1, 2.

St. Paul was, so, influenced by the spirit of this divine prayer of our blessed Saviour for unity among His disciples, that *he* considered all faith, and all acts of beneficence, as nothing, unless they were accompanied by charity, or love, which is the very ground of unity. The whole chapter, in which this great truth is taught*, is most appropriate to this subject of religious peace, and may be read with the best effect, by all who are, indeed, in religious, as well as in worldly, affairs, desirous to be of the blessed number of those peace makers, who shall be called THE CHILDREN OF GOD. If, after perusal of this chapter, they feel, truly, zealous for religious peace; then, abhorring all schism, all separation from Church communion, they will exert their best powers, affectionately, to dissuade a mistaken brother from religious error, and to make the most charitable advances towards spiritual union with all who profess to hope for salvation from the Redeemer of the world, whose religion is peace, and whose principles are opposed to all disunion.

Fourthly, we may be considered as peace makers, when, through mistake or accident, or, even, through design, uneasiness having, unhappily, arisen between us, and any relation or friend, we, meekly, use the best means in our power to disperse the offence, and to restore a good feeling. We are all liable to mistake each other, and may, often, very unintentionally, occasion pain to another. On whichever

* 1 Cor. xiii.

side, the fault, or the cause of offence, be, let each party be ready to offer explanation, and to receive the first conciliatory approach. In some unguarded moment, both parties may have been irritated, and incapable to guard against cutting expressions; but, to minds, properly, formed, on Christian principles, the hour of cool reflection must, soon, arrive. *Then*, let it not be, too nicely, considered, with whom the offence originated. Rather, let an earnest desire of reconciliation prevail, and the wounds of friendship and affection may, soon, be healed.

Do we profess ourselves Christians? Are we all children of the same Father? Are we all animated by the same hope, in CHRIST JESUS? Do we repair to the same altar of mercy, for pardon? *Then*, let us attend to the advice of our great Lord and Master: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first, be reconciled to thy brother, and, then, come and offer thy gift." And "agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him," (while God, mercifully, prolongs thy life, thy season of probation, for eternity;) "lest, at any time, the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee; thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

It would be happy for the world if the spirit of this heavenly precept were suffered to prevail. But, instead of *seeking* agreement and reconciliation, when quarrels have, unhappily, divided the sweetest friendship, are the kind approaches to conciliation, never rejected? Is explanation, when affectionately sought, never, refused? Is it, when affectinately offered, never, resisted? May the love of Christ, constrain us all, in our several relations, to put these questions to ourselves, and, seriously, with a view to perfection, to reflect what application they have to our particular case!

Do we think that we have received offence? Let us, then, remembering our offences, before God, pray that God would *forgive us, as we forgive them that trespass against us*; let us, in the mild spirit of Christianity, repair to our supposed adversary, and, kindly, prefer our complaint. Let us, thus truly, *seek* reconciliation, and it will not, ordinarily, be difficult, when so sought, to be obtained.

Do we think that we may, in some unguarded moment, have uttered an hasty expression that may have hurt our brother; or that we may, very unintentionally, perhaps, have had the misfortune to have occasioned him pain? Then, let us present the peace offering of affectionate explanation. Should our offering *not* be, readily, accepted; should the ear *not* listen to the voice of conciliation; should we seek, *in vain*, to be heard, either

that we did not *mean* to offend, or that we are, unfeignedly, sorry for the ebullition of some unguarded season; and should our offended brother still persist against that perfect reconciliation which we, anxiously, and, as true Christians, seek; let us not be weary in our labour of Christian love. Let us, again and again, profess our readiness to restore the confidence which has been shaken, to explain the suspected parts of our conduct, and to apologise, if apology shall be found requisite: in short, to do all we can, to reconcile, and to be reconciled. If, after every repeated attempt, our Christian purpose still remains unaccomplished, we have done our duty. Let us continue to do it, by praying, with unfeigned love, for our *unyielding* brother, and for ourselves, that God, of His infinite mercy, would *pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, which is the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before the Lord*". Blessed are they, who, in this frail season of life, in this probation, in this pilgrimage,—when we are so apt to oppose and inconvenience each other, by mistake,—are thus PEACE MAKERS: for they shall be called THE CHILDREN OF GOD, who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust". We should, thus, let *our* mercy dispose us to peace; not with the peaceful *only*, but as

" Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday. * St. Matt. v. 45.

much, also, as is possible with the *unpeaceful*. Brethren, “ If it be possible, as much as lieth in you live, peaceably, with all men ^y. ”

Again, we may be considered as peace makers, when, from a spirit of universal love to mankind, we, prudently, endeavour to restore peace among our neighbours, when misunderstanding or discord separates them. We may, often, have the uneasiness to observe persons, whom we know to be good persons, and wishing well to each other, still, from some trifling cause, separated from the mutual confidence that, once, prevailed between them; shunning each other's society, which, before, had been, mutually, courted; and meeting, if meeting, with uneasiness! And shall we observe this sad reverse, with cool indifference, and not strive to heal the offence, to join again in the sweet bonds of friendship, those who should never have been separated? Truly, here is an opportunity for the peace maker to exert his precious efforts: an opportunity for him to approve himself THE CHILD OF GOD, by kind mediation: and, with the dignified charities of the gospel, to inquire: Are ye not brethren? Why quarrel ye, among yourselves? recollect your former friendships—have you either had peace, since that friendship was broken? Be, then, reconciled to each other. Dismiss all animosity. Mutually, offer, and, mutually, receive,

^y Rom. xii. 18.

explanation ; and, so, prepare yourselves to meet, again, if it be the good pleasure of the Almighty that you should meet again, in a future world, in unfeigned friendship and love ; in regions prepared by the blessed Jesus for his disciples ; those regions, where we may hope to be employed in praising our Redeemer, in uninterrupted harmony, with a great multitude of all nations, kindred and people, and tongues, crying with a loud voice ; “ Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb *.”

Ask, then, yourselves, if, ever, you hope, in a better world than this, to meet, again, those, with whom you are passing the Christian course, here ; ask yourselves, whether, in your respective relations, as parents or children ; as brothers or sisters ; as masters or servants ; as rulers or subjects ; or in whatever other relation you may be ; have you been peace makers, delighting to promote, peace, to the utmost of your power, and to restore it, wherever it has been injured ? If you can, indeed, answer that you have, you may be happy in the honoured, and honourable, appellation of CHILDREN OF GOD. And, if *children*, then, ye will be partakers of the favour and approbation of God, more tenderly, displayed, than the tenderest parent, on earth, can display his love towards his children. You shall receive the rich inheritance of THE CHIL-

* Rev. vii. 10.

DREN OF GOD, the precious promise of having **HIM** as your reconciled Father. Being justified by faith, and approved by charity, you shall have peace with God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through **CHRIST JESUS**; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, might, majesty, and dominion, this day, and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON XV.

ST. MATT. V. 10.

*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake :
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

THE blessings of THE GOSPEL are superior to all that *this world* can bestow. The happiness of *the world* consists in the prosperous course of its affairs ; and, in adverse circumstances, the man of the world is cast down. But the Gospel is LIGHT, in darkness ; HEALTH, in sickness ; PROSPERITY, in adversity. The Prophet *Isaiah* shows the joy that shall be, in the midst of afflictions, by the birth and kingdom of Christ. “ The dimness,” he says, “ shall not be such as was in her vexation, when, at the first, he lightly afflicted the land of *Zebulun* and the land of *Naphtali*, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond *Jordan*, in *Galilee*, of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light : they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined *.”

Another Prophet, more literally, applies the con-

* Isa. ix. 1, 2.

solatory principles of faith, by displaying the confidence, which the righteous man possesses in God, in the midst of distress, and under a failure of the good things of the world : “ Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation ^b.”

In this passage, the Prophet pronounces the greatest blessing upon those, who, through a lively faith, submit to their respective privations, *for the sake of righteousness*. Under any tribulations in this world, *their* hearts need not to be troubled. They know that their Master has “ overcome the world ^c,” and they have His promise, that, if they suffer as His disciples ; if they fight a good fight, and “ have kept the faith ^d,” they are more than conquerors : for “ henceforth there is laid up for *them* “ a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give ^e” them.

I shall illustrate this subject, by showing in what particulars we may be said to be *persecuted for righteousness sake*, and may, reasonably, hope to obtain, as our reward and inheritance, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

^b Habak. iii. 17, 18.

^c St. John xvi. 33.

^d 2 Tim. iv. 7.

^e 2 Tim. iv. 8.

First, we may observe, that *they are persecuted for righteousness sake*, who suffer for, openly, professing the Gospel, as' the first Christians did. *They* encountered much cruel treatment for their belief, nobly expressed, in JESUS CHRIST, their crucified Redeemer; and they sealed their profession by, resolutely, submitting to the cruellest martyrdoms, rather than renounce their faith, or deny their divine and beloved Master. And, before the time of the first Christians, we read, in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, that, through faith, and in maintenance of it: "others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy.) They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Blessed, doubtless, they were who were, thus, persecuted, in the cause of righteousness: they received not the promise, made to the righteous, in *this*

^f Heb. xi. 35—40.

world, further than in the satisfaction of their own pure and upright consciences ; but God had provided some better thing for them, who, thus, qualified themselves for his precious promises and blessings, in a future and a better state.

And we, though, now we, happily, live in more peaceable times ; when we are not in danger of these and like cruel persecutions for our adherence to the faith ; when kings, from persecutors have become nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers of the Church ^b, still, need to be admonished to cultivate that firm attachment to our faith, that we would be disposed, unshakenly and gloriously, to suffer, as the original martyrs, and first Christians did, if we should, ever, be called to do so, in its necessary defence.

This noble attachment to our holy religion is to be nourished by the purity, the sincerity, the zeal, of our faith, derived from a diligent search of the Scriptures, and confirmed by prayer, and the subsequent innocency of our lives. Then, in the language of the devout Psalmist, “ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” Then, “ The Lord of

^b Isa. xlix. 23.

Hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge¹." Then, notwithstanding all the violence of cruel or mistaken men, who persecute and ill treat us for our love of God, we shall remain firm in our righteous steadfastness. But, if persecution should arise against us, in an evil hour, when our faith is not, scripturally, rooted, nor our lives correspondent to our sacred professions ; when, neither our faith nor our practice have been such as to cause us to feel that we possess an interest in Christ, nor are in favour with God ; *then*, we shall yield under the shock that assails us ; *then*, we shall, ignobly, surrender our constancy—*then*, we shall be very far from the BLESSING promised unto those who are PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE.

Secondly, we are persecuted for righteousness sake, when, having, resolutely, entered on a religious course ; and, when, faithfully, pursuing the means of continuance in it, by prayer and constant attendance on all religious ordinances, we are ridiculed for our piety by those, with whom we mix in the world. This ridicule is, often, found the most powerful weapon to detach the young, and the unsteady, from their righteous purpose. When all other arguments, and all other attempts, have failed, *then* the magic wand of ridicule is often, too successfully, waved. Piety reclines her head, and a religious carelessness, which is not our character, is, often,

¹ Ps. xlii. 1—7.

assumed. Sometimes, this ungenerous dread of being thought too righteous, leads to the profession of vices which are *not* pursued : and men have been known, voluntarily, to be under the imputation of crimes, which they did not practise, and which they would not commit. Can such receive the blessing promised to those, who are persecuted, *for righteousness sake* ? Are *they* stedfast, as should be the disciples of JESUS CHRIST, who was resolute in his purpose to save men, even to the sufferings of the cross ? Are *they* persecuted for righteousness sake, who are *ashamed of Christ*, and who, wither under the blast of wicked men's ridicule ? Let such professing, but irresolute, Christians, learn a better lesson, even from a heathen writer :—

The man, in conscious virtue bold,
Who dares his secret purpose hold,
Unshaken hears the crowd's tumultuous cries,
And the impetuous tyrant's angry brow defies.

Let the wild winds, that rule the seas,
Tempestuous, all their horrors raise ;
Let Jove's dread arm with thunders rend the spheres,
Beneath the crush of worlds, undaunted he appears.

HOR. Ode III. Book III.

*Translated by Philip Francis, D.D.*¹

¹ In the original thus,

Justum, ac tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solida ; neque Auster

Let Christians, deeply, consider, that “ he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved¹.” Let them attend to the holy apostle, and hear him, prudently, advising, and, nobly, exclaiming, “ Watch thou in all things ; endure afflictions For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them, also, that love his appearing¹ ;” unto all, who, so, love his appearing as to live in an habitual preparation for it, weaning their souls from undue attachment to this world, and its pursuits ; purifying their hearts, and their tempers, generally, by the principles of the gospel, and acquiring those upright dispositions which, alone, can fit them for the kingdom of heaven.

Thirdly, we may be said to be persecuted *for righteousness sake*, when, by reason of our, steadily, pursuing a religious course of life, we are refused certain worldly advantages, which we might obtain, by adopting a different course, and compromising

Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ :

Nec fulminantis magna Jovis manus.

Si fractus illabatur orbis,

Impavidum ferient ruinæ.

^b St. Mark xiii. 13.

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 5, &c.

our duty. Whenever such trials shall occur, we are to show, decidedly, to what master we belong : and to Him, whose service we, unfeignedly, perform, we are to look for our reward. Two masters, we know, we cannot serve^m : God, and the world, may divide our affections, but both cannot *reign*. If God, then, be our master, let us truly love and serve Him, with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our mindsⁿ. We may, then, be persecuted for the sake of our righteousness ; but we shall not be overcome, by any fiery affliction. We shall rise, more than conquerors, through JESUS CHRIST ; and great will our reward be in heaven. We have, there, treasures laid up ; “ where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal^o ;” and blessed shall we be, if, in this world, we suffer, by reason of the pious provision which we have made, in the midst of our temptations, for eternity. “ Blessed is the man”, who so “ endureth temptation : for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him^p.”

The Scriptures, which are, mercifully, given for our admonition, not only, exhort us to integrity, under the bitterest sufferings, but they produce, in holy *Job*, an example worthy of our devoutest imitation. “ Hast thou,” saith the Lord unto Satan,

^m St. Matt. vi. 24.

^o St. Matt. vi. 20.

ⁿ St. Matt. xxii. 37.

^p St. James i. 12.

“ considered my servant *Job*, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man ; one that feareth God, and escheweth evil ? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the Lord, and said ; skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give, for his life. But put forth thine hand, now, and touch his bone, and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said to Satan : behold he is in thy hand ; but save his life¹. ”

Read this ancient, this curious, this instructive, history of *Job*, and you will find that, amidst all his persecutions and sufferings, he “ sinned not, neither charged God foolishly². ” Hear him, as nobly, exclaim, as he, faithfully, performed : “ As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment ; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul ; all the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils ; my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit till I die I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go : my heart shall not reproach me, so long as I live³. ”

Bright and holy as is this example of suffering and triumphant righteousness, turn to another, *brighter and more holy*. Turn to the example,

¹ Job ii. 9—6.

² Job i. 22.

³ Job xxvii. 2—6.

chiefly deserving our attention, to that of THE BLESSED JESUS. Was ever suffering, *for righteousness sake*, like the sufferings that HE endured? Was ever righteousness persecuted, as HIS righteousness was? Was ever obedience to God, surmounting every cruelty, so conspicuous? In the fortieth Psalm, prophetic of His bitter suffering, He is represented, by faithful *David*, as declaring, in the knowledge of those persecutions that were to encompass him; "Then said I, lo, I come: in the volume of the Book, it is written of me; I *delight* to do thy will, O my God! yea, thy law is within my heart[†]."

We find, accordingly, throughout the sacred history of this, our suffering, Redeemer, that the bitterest persecutions could not shake Him from His generous purpose; but that He, steadily, endured the contradiction of sinners; that He, resolutely, sustained every indignity and cruelty that enmity to His sacred person could devise: and that, when, in His agony and tremendous passion, he had, exclaimed: "O my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," He, mercifully, for our sakes, adds, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," and "if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done[‡]." Here is the holiest example possible of persecution, steadily endured, *for righteousness*

[†] Ps. xl. 7, 8.

[‡] St. Matt. xxvi. 39.

^{*} St. Matt. xxvi. 42.

sake. May we profit from this lesson, mercifully, conveyed to us, by this, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, THE FRIEND OF HUMAN KIND, THE ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN, THE ONLY REDEEMER, JESUS CHRIST. Then, let our persecutions and our sufferings be as great as they can be, in this world, we shall be blessed in our deeds; *God's faithfulness and mercy shall be with us; and, in his name, our horn shall be exalted*¹; and ours shall be THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Lastly, they may be said to be persecuted for righteousness sake, who, by reason of the conscientious practice of all the duties of their religion, are called by opprobrious names, and so exposed to taunt and ridicule; and, sometimes, to the most uncandid insinuations. Our blessed Saviour was persecuted after this manner by the Jews, who had no dealings, on account of some religious differences, with the *Samaritans*. "Say we not well," replied that perverse people, when He was labouring, in vain, to convince them that He was sent to be their Redeemer, "say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil²." This cutting taunt, they, vainly, thought, would diminish His authority among the people, and it satisfied their malignant resentment of His precious doctrines.

Nothing is more common than, when any pious character is to be traduced, to assail it under some

¹ Ps. lxxxix. 24.

² St. John viii/48.

unpopular name, or to class it with those, who, from ignorance or wicked pursuits, have disgraced their profession. The clergy have been, especially, subject to these taunts of the unthinking, the light, or the wicked, in their honest exertions to discharge their sacred obligations. Then, they have shared in the opprobrium *attempted*, too frequently, to be attached to those, who *let their light shine before men*, and would *so glorify their Father which is in heaven* *. BLESSED ARE THEY WHO THUS SUFFER! The testimony that they, practically, bear to the truth, as it is in Christ, shall give them the sweetest consolation, as they pass their pilgrimage, upon earth: and, when this earth shall close upon them, that Master whom they have, *indeed*, served, will be found faithful, and they shall be admitted into THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

But, it is the duty of religious persons to guard, as much as is possible, against all unnecessary exposure of themselves to such sarcasms, by, prudently; avoiding unnecessary austerities, and overcharged severity. Religion, properly understood, denies us no innocent recreations. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life, to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her" †. By affixing to her a gloom, which does not belong to her, many have, very unintentionally, injured

* St. Matt. v. 16.

† Prov. iii. 17, 18.

her best interests, and deprived the world of the benefit that might have, otherwise, resulted from their example. There is danger, indeed, and great danger, on the other side, from the contagion of thoughtless habits and criminal indulgences. A prudent Christian will, faithfully, avoid both dangers. He will not corrupt, by thoughtless or trifling conduct: nor will he deter others from the paths of piety, by any strictness, which the religion of his Divine Master does not require; who was, Himself, present at innocent festivities; who knew well what was in man, and, offering rest to wounded souls, laid a foundation for general godliness, as well in the liberality of His conduct, as in the purity of His precepts.

It may be expedient to add a caution to those persons who have been disgusted with professions from others which they have thought hypocritical. Let *them*, in the charity of the Gospel, be slow to come to a conclusion, prejudicial to their brother's character; let them, candidly, hope, that persons *may be* sincere, according to their profession, however they may, at any time, suppose *them mistaken*: and let them, charitably, abstain from the application of unworthy epithets to those who may, very conscientiously, think it proper to assume stricter appearances than *they* do. The strictest liver may, too, be admonished, *not* to charge a brother, who thinks it expedient to live in less confinement, with a departure from the spirit

of the Gospel. For this would be a kind of persecution: and both parties, while they were thinking to do God a service, might, though in very different ways, be the unhappy instruments of *impeding* the KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

This subject of the blessedness of those who are *persecuted, for righteousness sake*, calls to recollection the exhortation of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, upon whom an assault had been made, both by "the Gentiles," and also by "the Jews, with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them." Undismayed by these cruelties, they continued steadfast in Christ's doctrine, "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God^c."

Tribulation awaits the Christian, in every stage, and in every circumstance of life. The common disasters of sickness, of loss of friends, of failures of well-grounded expectations, of death, through many lingering and painful approaches, are all tribulations, though mercifully intended to wean our affections from this world, and to fix them on a better. Besides these, which are uneasinesses attendant upon *all* who enter human life; we have seen that there are persecutions *peculiar* to us, as Christians. Our Saviour warns us of *these*, and comforts us under them, when he says, "In the

^c Acts xiv. 22.

world ye shall have tribulation ; but” He adds, “ be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world ^d.” We, too, shall overcome the world, through His all-powerful merits, if we be faithful to our high calling, and persevere in our righteous course, to the end of our lives. This will secure us the blessing, the favour, the never-ceasing protection of God. In the language of the holy Apostle :

“ What shall we, then, say to these things ? If God be for us, who *can* be against us ? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things ? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us

^d St. John xvi. 33.

from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord *."

Blessed are they who can find within themselves the consolations of this stedfastness, under all the trials, the difficulties, the sufferings, and persecutions, of the world. Those trials, those difficulties, those sufferings, and those persecutions, can last, *but a little time*; but THE KINGDOM OF GOD remaineth, for ever: and that kingdom will be our inheritance, if we persevere in righteousness, and in faithful obedience to the Son of God, who, "when He had, by Himself, purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high^f," who "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them^g;" to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, might, majesty, and dominion, this day, and for ever! *Amen.*

* Rom. viii. 31—39.

^f Heb. i. 3.

^g Heb. vii. 25.

SERMON XVI.

ST. MATT. V. 10, 11.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.

THIS is the last of the beatitudes, pronounced by our blessed Saviour, in his Sermon on the Mount. In the preceding beatitude, *they* were pronounced to be blessed, who were *persecuted for righteousness sake*. In the consideration of that beatitude, we have stated the leading instances, wherein men suffer, under persecution for righteousness sake. We are, now, to consider the more striking cases, wherein you will be blessed, when men shall *revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for Christ's sake*. Then, rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN: FOR SO PERSECUTED THEY THE PROPHETS, WHICH WERE BEFORE YOU.

It is worthy of remark, that the blessing, here

pronounced, is not, simply, by reason of our being reviled, and persecuted, and having all manner of evil said against us, for Christ's sake ; but it is when all this is done, *falsely*. This, plainly, implies, that our profession of Christ must be sincere ; which is, also, taught, when our Saviour declares : “ Not every one that *saith* unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven^a.” No high sounding profession, that we *believe in Christ*, and *trust to His merits* for salvation ; that we are *wretched sinners*, and unable to do any thing, of ourselves ; that we are *poor and helpless*, in our natural state, but *rich and powerful*, in Christ, can, alone, avail us. All this is, indeed, strictly and wofully, true ; and, whoever trusts to himself for spiritual growth and salvation, will, assuredly, be, sadly, deceived ; but then, in addition to the confession of our own weakness and the all-sufficiency of Christ to cure that weakness ; we must give proof of the sincerity of our faith by the uprightness of our lives, and by their conformity to the laws of our God and our Redeemer. Then, if men revile us, and persecute us, and speak all manner of evil against us, for Christ's sake, they do so, *falsely* : and we shall be blessed, by that righteous and omniscient Master, “ who will render to every man according to his deeds—to them,

^a St. Matthew vii. 21.

who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; **ETERNAL LIFE**: but unto them that are contentious, and do *not* obey the truth, but obey *unrighteousness*; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God ^b.”

Thus we see that the blessing of heaven, promised in the text, is dependant on our *righteousness*, and that our *righteousness* is to be proved by our *sincerity*: in short, it is, absolutely, necessary that the *heart* be correct, in order that the *conduct* may be approved. Blessed are we, then, when men shall revile us and persecute us, and speak all manner of evil against us, *falsely*, for Christ's sake.

In the further prosecution of this subject, I shall, familiarly, state, when it is that persons may be said to be reviled, and persecuted, and spoken *falsely* against for Christ's sake, and shall conclude these discourses on the beatitudes by, briefly, offering some appropriate exhortation.

First, persons were reviled and persecuted, and spoken of, *falsely*, for Christ's sake, when, because they professed HIM to be their Lord and Master, their **SPIRITUAL KING**, to whom they first owed

^b Romans ii. 6—11.

allegiance, they were maligned and ill-treated, as enemies to the existing government, and were accused as being seditious persons.

Our blessed Saviour, though a pattern of all humility and submissive obedience to lawful authority; though, rather than be deficient in paying tribute, to whom tribute was due,—from which, as **THE SON OF GOD**, He was exempt,—He ordered a miracle to produce the tribute from the sea^c: yet He was not free from the accusation of being a seditious person. For we read, in the Gospel of *St. Luke*, that, at that solemn hour, when *Judas* had betrayed Him, and after He had instituted the Holy Sacrament, in commemoration of His sufferings, and as the means of grace: “the whole multitude of them” (of the *Sanhedrin*, the chief court of the Jews) “arose, and led Him unto *Pilate*. And they began to accuse Him, saying, we found this *Fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to *Cæsar*, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King. And *Pilate* asked Him, saying, art thou **THE KING OF THE JEWS**? And He answered him, and said, thou sayest it”—or; *it is, as thou hast said*. “Then said *Pilate* to the chief priests, and to the people,” (in attestation of his own conviction of Christ’s innocence) “I find no fault in this man. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching

^c St. Matthew xvii. 27.

throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place^d."

How little reason, the governors among the Jews, or the subjects of *Cæsar*, had, thus, to represent Christ as the enemy of the just privileges of either, is evident, from the general spirit of His doctrine, which inculcates obedience, wherever obedience is due. We have, however, in the twentieth Chapter of *St Luke*, a very *particular* instance of Christ's doctrine of submission to the powers that be. The Jews, at the time referred to, were under the power and government of the Romans, and *Cæsar* was the person executing that power. The Jews, whose prejudice against Christ, blinded them against all conviction of His divine mission, and hurried them on, in the persecution of Christ, to the last fatal tragedy of the crucifixion, "sought to lay hands on Him And they watched Him, and sent forth spies . . . , that they might take hold of His words, that so they might deliver Him unto the power, and authority, of the governor. And they asked Him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest, and teachest, rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any ; but teachest the way of God truly. He answered and said unto them, "Is it lawful for us (*Jews*) to give tribute unto *Cæsar*, or not ?" But he perceived their craftiness (*in designing from His answer to represent Him to the gover-*

^d *St. Luke* xxiii. 1—5.

nors, as an enemy to Cæsar, or to the Jewish people, as an enemy to their liberty) and (therefore) said to them, why tempt ye me? Shew me a (Roman) penny, (and tell me) whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Cæsar's. And He said to them (this, by your own acknowledgment, is an evidence that you are under Cæsar's government) Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God, the things that are God's;" (that is, the tribute required for the service of the Temple†.)*

It is, then, plain, that Christ was, falsely, accused of sedition, by these persecuting Jews; and it is evident, from His sacred doctrine, and example, that the payment of taxes, is a just and necessary part of duty, from subjects to that government, under which their persons, and their properties, are protected.

The same false accusations, which prevailed against Christ, prevailed, also, against His Apostles, and the first teachers of Christianity, as might be shown, from many passages. But, there is one particular passage, in the sixth Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, of calumniated innocence, in the person of St. Stephen, deserving our especial attention. "There arose," we read, "certain of the Synagogue, which is called the Synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians,

* St. Luke xxiii. 2.

† St. Luke xx. 19—25.

and of them of *Cilicia*, and of *Asia*, disputing with *Stephen*. And they were not able to resist the wisdom, and the spirit, by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard Him speak blasphemous words, against *Moses* and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the Elders, and the Scribes, and came upon Him, and caught Him, and brought Him to the council. And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words, against this holy place and the law. For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which *Moses* delivered us ⁸."

If it should be *our* lot to be, so *falsely*, charged, to be, so *cruelly*, treated, as *St. Stephen* was, out of a cruel indignation for our professing belief in Christ—may we, under, even, the severest death which he sustained, should it be the will of God *we* so die, imitate his Christian spirit, and pray for our enemies: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge ⁹." Then, we may rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, over all our sufferings for Christ's sake: for so the Prophets and righteous persons were persecuted, before us; but it will be sad, indeed, for those, who are actuated by the same malignant spirit, as actuated the persecutors of the righteous, before our Saviour's time, or during his abode on

⁸ Acts vi. 9—14. ⁹ Acts vii. 60.

earth, or at any subsequent period. Hear **JESUS CHRIST** pronouncing the woe on such, and foretelling the righteous what they must encounter for his sake, in the propagation of Christianity.

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If *we* had been in the days of our fathers, we would *not* have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the Prophets.” Again, “Wherefore behold, I send unto you Prophets, and wise men, and Scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous *Abel* unto the blood of *Zacharias*, son of *Baruchias*, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.” Then follows that most pathetic lamentation over the devoted city of **JERUSALEM**: “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!”

These passages of Scripture, plainly, testify to the persecution of Christ and his disciples, and of the prophets which were before them. Blessed shall *we* be ; and great will be our reward, in heaven, if, called to suffer the like evils, we tread in *their steps of patience, of fortitude, of meekness, of prayer for our enemies and for ourselves !*

Secondly, we are reviled, and persecuted, and falsely spoken of, for Christ's sake, when, with the *most zealous wishes*, and under *the best intended exertions*, for the advancement of the pure Gospel of Christ, we are accused of *indifference* in its holy cause, because we do not join with party in *some particular means*, adopted and prescribed by it ; but which means we may, conscientiously, deem to be improper. This is a fruitful cause of calumny, among such as are *not* guided, in their zeal to do God service, by that charity, *which hopeth all things* to the credit of their brother, which *believeth all things*.

The blessed principles of the Gospel have, indeed, been so far perfected, and human laws so formed, in this happy country, on those principles, that direct persecution of the body for differences of opinion, as to ways and means of extending the kingdom of Christ, is not resorted to ; but many a virtuous character, whose object is good, and, often, precisely similar to that of the mistaken calumniator, is, still, injured by unworthy insinuation of his

hostility to the cause, in the support of which, if necessary, life would be forfeited. If we look abroad into the world, we shall see too many instances of this *false speaking* against the disciples of Christ, of this reviling and persecuting, for Christ's sake, and by those who think that they are doing Christ a service. Here is opportunity for the injured disciple of an injured Master, while he rejoices in the consciousness of his own upright intentions; while he reflects, with delight, that the aim of his life has been to promote the object, in which a party spirit accuses him of negligence,—to pray as Jesus, when overwhelmed in calumny and suffering, prayed: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!”

Thirdly, we are reviled, and persecuted, and falsely spoken of, for Christ's sake, when, for our honest firmness to maintain his true doctrines, against prevailing indifference and corruption, we are stigmatized as bigots. Bigotry, consisting in obstinate adherence to our *own* opinions, on unimportant and questionable points, and inclining us to persecute others, who do not hold, *precisely*, the same opinions as ourselves, is, ever, to be reprobated. But, while we despise such obstinacy, on *unimportant* points, let us be careful that we do not plunge into the sea of *indifference*, as to *any* opinion. Let us rather consider well, that it is an

¹ St. Luke xxiii. 34.

apostolical exhortation to "hold fast the form of sound words^k," to "*hold fast the faithful word, as we have been taught, that we may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers^l*," and that it is our duty "earnestly^m to "contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints." These admonitions are decisive, that there is a form of sound and faithful words, and that there is a true faith, to maintain which, zealously, against any who would *swell* their own feeble reason to *depress* revelation, or who will believe nothing but that for which they can account, is *not* bigotry. It is being, *zealously*, affected in *its* good cause, and is that EARNESTNESS FOR TRUTH, which is agreeable to the Word of God, and commendable among all good men.

Our blessed Saviour, in the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, says to his disciples "Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." They, misunderstanding him, thought that he was, literally, speaking to them concerning *leaven*, which was used, as our yeast is, in making bread. But he convinced them, that, by the word *leaven*, he was speaking, figuratively, and intended to warn them against the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which soured their manners, and corrupted their whole

^k 2 Tim. i. 13.

^l Titus i. 9.

^m Jude 3.

ⁿ St. Matt. xvi. 6.

conduct, as *leaven*, which was not good, would sour the bread, into the composition of which it entered. "*Then*," we read, "understood they how that He bade them *not* beware of the *leaven* of bread, but of the *doctrine* of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees?"

It is, then, our duty to beware of false doctrine, and to be zealously disposed to maintain the true faith, as it is taught in the Gospel. Whoever does so, with the *mildness* of the Gospel, but with the *firmness* of a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and is reproached as a bigot, for his constancy and fervent affection for the faith, *he* is spoken falsely of, for Christ's sake: and they are to be condemned, who "*presume*," as we read in the eighteenth Article of our Church, "to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law; and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us, only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved." If we are, then, called bigots, for our affection to the sacred truth, and for our zeal to maintain Christ's doctrine, against prevailing indifference what mode of faith prevails, then, we may be said to be persecuted, *for Christ's sake*, and we may rejoice at our sufferings, in *the righteous cause*.

Fifthly, we are persecuted for Christ's sake, when, by reason of our conscientious and firm love, and support, of that part of Christ's HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, established in these dominions, persons withhold from us their earthly favours, and confine them to their own sect or party. This is too prevailing a practice, and among none is so common, as among those who boast of superior religion, understanding, and liberality. Regardless, often, of the admonitions of our blessed Lord and His apostles, *to do good to them, even, that hate us*^p, *to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace"*^q, *as much as lieth in us, to live peaceably with all men*^r, and to be obedient to authorities; having separated themselves from THE VISIBLE CHURCH OF CHRIST, they decline, as much as is possible, dealings with her members, and unite with every sect, however opposite to their own, in diminishing the interests of the Church.

Such conduct, wheresoever it prevails, is far from partaking of the liberal spirit of the gospel, which discountenances all little sectarian prejudices, that drive Christians into parties, and destroy that beauteous harmony, which it was one great object of JESUS CHRIST to establish, upon earth.

It is far from being intended, by these remarks, to occasion pain to any brother of whatever per-

^p St. Matt. v. 44.

^q Ephesians iv. 3.

^r Romans xii. 18.

suasion, and under whatever mistake, who, honestly, wishes to serve THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. It is hoped, only, to convey a Christian caution, against that indifference to the unity, recommended in the gospel, which is, seldom, unaccompanied with a narrow party spirit; inclining, if not to unworthy thoughts of the members of the Church, to that partiality, at least, to the sectaries, which renders *them*, exclusively, the objects of favour in worldly affairs. *Then*, the members of the Church, who, still, forego that favour, in conscientious adherence to the religion of their country; of their fathers; of their Church, and of the gospel, may be said to be persecuted, and are, often, reviled, for Christ's sake. But their constancy; their perseverance unto the end, shall be rewarded, when Christ cometh, a second time, to judge the world, — to reward every one who holds fast “the faithful word, as he has been taught.”

Lastly, men revile us, and persecute us, and say evil things against us, falsely, for Christ's sake, when they censure us, and our characters, for the signal practice of our holy religion; when they reproach us, as being gloomy, and unsocial, and incapacitated for the affairs of the world. The religion of Christ deserves no taunt, nor sarcasm, of this kind. Properly understood, it deprives us of *no recreation*; of *no amusement*, consistent with the

^s Titus i. 9.

reasonable wishes of reasonable creatures; nor does it check any of those industrious habits, or pursuits, which constitute the prosperity, and promote the comfort, of the world. It encourages, on the contrary, to the most generous extent, the practice of every relative and social duty, and it advances, to the utmost possible perfection, in this state of mortality, the happiness of those individuals who are influenced and guided by her pure and holy precepts. Indeed, there is no happiness without religion. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." But, hear your blessed Saviour, proclaiming His best gift of peace to those who go unto him: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And, what are the obligations of those who *do* go unto Him? Are they such as render them *gloomy* in themselves, *unsocial* to others, or *inapt* to business? No! They dignify a Christian *to himself*, in his own conscious truth, and purity, and unfeigned communion with his Father which is in heaven; and they dignify and endear him, *towards others*, in his charity, in his integrity, in his disinterested endeavours to do good, and in his unfeigned love of every brother, as of himself. *They*, then, who represent ~~THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST~~, in any other than in the most amiable and practical view, who stigmatize them, as morose, or, as unfriendly to the

† Isaiah lvii. 21. ‡ St. Matt. xi. 28.

happiness and welfare of society, *say evil things of them, falsely*, and show how little *they* know of the external blessings of a religious temper, or of that inward spiritual refreshment of the heart, resulting from the consideration and experience of God's gracious promises in Christ. If, then, evil or mistaken men *will speak, falsely*, of us, for Christ's sake; let us answer them, by prayer, that God would pour conviction into their hearts, and rectify their mistakes. And let us, if we should, at any time, be, unhappily, reviled, and persecuted for being FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, repeat, from the most grateful hearts, the pious breathings of the apostle; "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort: who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort, wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For, as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ*."

The view, which has been taken, in the course of these sermons, of the beatitudes, pronounced by our blessed Saviour, are demonstrative of His religion being of a nature very different from the spirit of the world. This world encourages sentiments of pride; of harshness; of obstinacy; of irreconciliation, under offence. The Christian re-

* 2 Cor. i. 3—5. is not denied

ligion encourages, poorness of spirit ; meekness ; forgiveness ; devotion to God and our Redeemer.

Jesus Christ, praying, on behalf of his disciples, says, " They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world^y." And yet, he says, " I pray not that thou shouldest take them *out* of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them *from the evil*."^z This plainly teaches us that, while we are *in* the world, though not *of* the world, that is, though not *of those* who are actuated by worldly motives, we must, *so*, live *in* the world, as to continue in the discharge of all the duties, which we owe to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. Whoever neglects any one, or more, of these duties, does not, *so*, live in the world as the disciple of Christ *should* live in it. There is no ground, therefore, for any charge against our Holy Religion, as incapacitating us for the obligations of life ; for, whoever does not discharge them, discharges not his duties, as a Christian ; to himself, nor to others. Let us all pray, then, to be sanctified, *through the truth of God*, which is *his word*^a, that we may be adorned with all the beauties of temper recommended in the gospel ; and that, by faith, by patience and comfort in His holy word, we may be triumphant over every suffering, and " may embrace, and, ever, hold fast,

^y St. John xvii. 14.

^z St. John xvii. 15.

^a St. John xvii. 17.

the blessed hope of everlasting life, given us in our Saviour, Jesus Christ:" to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due; all honour, praise, majesty, and dominion, this day and for ever. *Amen.*

^b Collect for the second Sunday in Advent.

SERMON XVII.

ST. MATT. XXvi. 26, 27, 28.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body.

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ;

For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

THE Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus Christ, at the time when he was eating the Passover with his disciples.

The Passover was a solemn feast, prescribed by God to the Israelites, while they were in bondage, in the land of Egypt. It was instituted, to preserve in their minds that wonderful deliverance, which they had experienced, when all the first born, in the land of Egypt, died ; while the plague was not suffered to approach the dwellings of the children of Israel.

This plague was sent upon the Egyptians, by reason of the hardness of heart of King *Pharaoh*, who refused to permit the children of Israel to

sacrifice to the Lord their God, though his permission had been, frequently, sought by *Moses*, and though very severe judgments had, plainly, marked God's disapprobation of his obstinate refusal; in which refusal, however, he persisted, with the most determined depravity, having, profanely, replied to the entreaties of *Moses* and his messengers: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord; neither will I let Israel go*."

In this history of *Pharaoh*, we have a most impressive example how far obstinacy may prevail, to blind the understanding, and to harden the heart; contrary to every approach made by God, in mercy and in judgment. And, in the subsequent overthrow of *Pharaoh* and all his host, we have an, equally, impressive example, of the power and justice of God, to punish all, who, incorrigibly, resist His wishes, and disobey His loving entreaties.

The words of the institution of the Passover are in the twelfth chapter of the book of Exodus, as follows:

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in
the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto
you the beginning of months: it shall be the first
month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the
congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of
this month they shall take to them every man a
sheaf of wheat, and bind it into bundles, as he
can, and lay them down before the door of their
tabernacles.

Exodus v. 2.

lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it, according to the number of the souls: every man according to his eating, shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: and ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door-post of the house, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast it with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is *the Lord's passover*. For I will pass through the land of Egypt, this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses

where ye are : and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this shall be unto you for a memorial ; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations ; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance, for ever ^b.”

This feast was, accordingly, solemnly observed by the Jews, to the time when our blessed Saviour appeared on the earth, and continues to be observed by them, at this present time. But we, knowing that the blood of *the Lamb*, which signified, beforehand, the blood of THE HOLY JESUS, was a type, since, fulfilled by the shedding of the blood of Jesus, on the cross, and by the perfect expiation then, once for all, made for every penitent believer ; have ceased to celebrate *the Passover*, and now, more justly, celebrate *the stupendous sacrifice of our BLESSED REDEEMER, by whose blood*, we are saved from the destroying angel, and from all that can assault or hurt our souls. And we do not celebrate this solemn event at the suggestion of our *own gratitude*, merely ; but, by the express command, most plainly signified, of JESUS CHRIST.

We read, in the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, that, as Jesus, who was a pattern of obedience in all righteousness, and who fulfilled every religious obligation, was eating the Passover, he “ took bread

^b Exodus xii. 1—14.

and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins^c."

Nothing can be plainer than that Jesus, from these words, intended this holy sacrament should be substituted, by those who professed themselves his disciples, in the room of the Passover; nor can any thing be more evident, than that such is the opinion, as it has been the constant practice, of all his faithful followers. We know that the apostles were constant in the administration of the Holy Sacrament, and in prayers. We know, too, that the primitive Christians followed their example; and we know, moreover, that, in proportion as the love of Christ abounds, among individuals, so His last gracious precept, in reference to this sacrament, as recorded by St. *Paul*, is regarded: "This do, in remembrance of me^d."

Thus, we observe, the *origin* of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and its *institution* by OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

Respecting the *nature* of the Sacrament, it may be observed, that the word *sacrament* means, in its original signification, a solemn oath taken by soldiers to fulfil their obligations, and to discharge

^c St. Matthew xxvi. 26—28.

^d 1 Cor. xi. 24.

the duties of their warfare. Transferring this to the duty of Christians, the word sacrament, as it refers to *them*, implies a strict obedience to all the laws of Christ, and a steady resolution to discharge every obligation, imposed by the gospel. To this, every one who receives this sacrament with becoming seriousness, binds himself, in the most solemn manner; even to believe all that Christ and His apostles have revealed, and to practise those holy precepts, which they have recommended to our attention.

: Considering the sacred obligations, to which we, thus, bind ourselves, in this Sacrament, we must regard it as the most solemn act of our religion. It comprehends the most grateful thanksgivings for the mercies of God, in CHRIST JESUS; it implies the devoutest prayer for God's mercy and assistance; and it encourages us to the strictest resolutions, to die unto sin, and rise, again, unto righteousness. It leads us to entertain the humblest notions of ourselves, and it encourages the most firm dependence upon the goodness of God, to render our faithful participation of the consecrated elements, the means of uniting us in the strictest bonds with that Saviour, whose death we commemorate. The priest, accordingly, just before he consecrates the bread and wine, offers up, on behalf of himself and the people, the following most pious, most humble, most awakening, prayer.

“ We do not presume to come to this thy table,

O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood, and that we may, evermore, dwell in Him, and He in us."

This prayer is grounded on the intimate communion held, in this Sacrament, with Christ, our Saviour, agreeably to His own words: "This is my body, and this is my blood"; words which, in a spiritual sense, convey ideas of the strictest union, intended to subsist between Christ and His disciples; which may incline *them* to be, as much as is possible, *one* with Him, in all that is holy, and in all that is adapted to constitute a real union with Him "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth".

Such, again, is the *nature* of the Sacrament,—since, in the counsel of God, the sacrifice of the Son of God was expedient to our redemption,—that it is calculated to preserve in our minds a deep sense of our own unworthiness. In *Adam*, all had sinned; and we, ourselves, alas! have,

* St. Matt. xxvi. 26. 28.

† 1 Pet. ii. 22.

individually, added to the sum of sin, thereby incurred. A great sacrifice was, then, necessary for our redemption; and, lo! a great sacrifice was offered. Was it the sacrifice of the cattle, over a thousand hills? Was it the blood of bulls and of goats? These had been, already, offered, and these, already, were the Lord's.—It was the blood of JESUS, alone, that could do away sin, and blot out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us. In due time, therefore, according to ancient prophecy, Jesus Christ came, and offered up His own sacred body, an atonement for the sins of the world. And was, ever, agony like unto His agony, in the day of God's wrath, when our Redeemer was “oppressed,” and when “it pleased the Lord to bruise Him,” to “put Him to grief,” and to “make His soul an offering for sin^e?” Hear Him, while He was sustaining God's displeasure, exclaiming: “My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me^h?” and listen to Him, praying, a little before He suffered for us: “O my Father! if it be possible; let this cup pass from meⁱ!” Yet, regardless of His own sufferings, and intent, only, upon *our* salvation, He adds, “nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt;” that is, let not the consideration of my sufferings prevail to an interference with that salvation which I am effecting for the whole lost

^e Isaiah liii.

^h St. Matt. xxvii. 46.

ⁱ St. Matt. xxvi. 39.

world. Can we reflect on such sufferings, on such magnanimity, in enduring them by the Son of God, and not turn our attentions within ourselves, in the deepest repentance and sorrow for our lost condition, and for those sins, which induced our blessed Redeemer, to tread “the wine-press alone^k,” — *in all the affliction of His people, to be afflicted^l*; and, *when there was none to help, to bring salvation^m*? O! let us loath all sin, which was the occasion of the tremendous sufferings of the Lamb of God. Let us detest and forsake it; and, forsaking it, let us devoutly pray:

“*Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us!*”

“O Lamb of God: that takest away the sins of the world;

“*Grant us thy peace!*”

“O Lamb of God: that takest away the sins of the world;

“*Have mercy upon usⁿ!*”

Such, moreover, is the nature of the Sacrament, that it is, admirably, calculated to unite us in bonds of the strictest religious and civil union with *each other*; since Christ died for all, and commanded the sacred symbols of His body and blood to be partaken of by all, in remembrance of Him. Are we, then, all intended to be benefitted by His death and passion? Are we all those, who, in the

^k Isaiah lxiii. 3.

^m Ver. 5.

^l Ver. 9.

ⁿ Litany.

spirit of the Gospel, should constitute *one fold*, under *one Shepherd*, JESUS CHRIST? And, shall we be divided in the mode of our professing, or worshipping, Christ? Rather, let us consider that “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all Churches of the Saints^o ;” rather, let us labour, with all humility, to fulfil the spirit of that excellent prayer, for union among the disciples of Christ, so devoutly offered by Him to our heavenly Father, in the seventeenth Chapter of the Gospel according to St. *John*: “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are^p.” The same affectionate prayer is repeated, with an enlargement, on behalf of others, who, through the union observable in Christ’s disciples, might be prevailed on to believe: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them, also, which shall believe on me through their word; that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me^q*.”

We hear much of a desire to convert the Jews and the Heathens, and to increase the number of Missionaries to preach the Gospel; and it is most gratifying to those who wish for the enlargement of Christ’s kingdom to hear it; but, here, is pointed out, by our Saviour, a means of extending belief in

^o 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

^p Ver. 11.

^q Ver. 20, 21.

Him that should, never, be neglected, even, UNION AMONG OURSELVES. This, too, is, plainly, signified by the Apostle, in these words : “ The cup, of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? the Bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? For,” it is added, “ we being many are one bread and one body ; for we are all partakers of that one bread ^r.” And, if we are all partakers of that one bread ; let us all partake of it, in sweet counsel with each other. Let us delight to go, *together*, “ into the house of the Lord ^t.” Let us “ pray for the peace of Jerusalem,” and say, “ peace be within thy walls ^t.” O, “ behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren, to dwell together in unity ^u !”

This religious union may be considered as the prelude of that sweet union and uninterrupted harmony, which is to prevail, hereafter, in the society of angels, and of just men made perfect. O ! let not, then, any trifling and unimportant differences interrupt it. Happy as we are, under a religious Establishment, embracing all the doctrines of the Gospel, let us, never, be seduced from our obedience to that pure branch of the Church of Christ, happily, flourishing in our land. Let us join in her worship, and let us, devoutly, attend her ordi-

^r 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

^t Psalm cxxii.

^s Psalm cxxii.

^u Psalm cxxxiii.

nances. This will, also, happily, tend to unite us in the strictest bonds of civil union, rendering us “kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another,” and making us kind fathers and affectionate children; merciful masters and obedient servants: in short, good men, loving and accommodating each other, in every relation, and in every varied walk of life.

Before we conclude this Sermon, it may be proper to offer an explanation of a passage which occurs in the writings of *St. Paul*, and which, it is believed, from misconception of its meaning, has prevented many from receiving the Lord’s Supper. The passage is:

“Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

“For he that eateth and drinketh, unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body *.”

This passage is a conclusion to the preceding verses, commencing at the twentieth verse; by reading which, it will appear that the Apostle was warning the Corinthians against, irreverently, using the bread and wine, which were intended as *memorials*, when consecrated, of *Christ’s body and*

* Romans xii. 10.

* 1 Cor. xi. 27—29.

blood, as the *means*, merely, of *corporeal refreshment*, and which they partook of, in a very disorderly manner.

“ For, in eating,” he observes, “ every one taketh before other his own supper : and one is hungry and another is drunken.

“ What ! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in ? or, despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not ? What shall I say to you ? Shall I praise you in this ? I praise you not.”

The Apostle proceeds to explain the institution and nature of the Holy Sacrament, as he had received it ; that it was a solemn memorial of the great love of Christ, in shedding His innocent blood, and offering up His sacred body for us ; a memorial, to be continued till He came, again, a second time, into the world.

DECENTLY, and IN ORDER², as all things are done in *our* Church, there is no fear of the same unworthy conduct being practised by us, as the Apostle, justly, censured among the Corinthians. In the words of a most learned and judicious commentator on the New Testament, the late Dr. *Daniel Whitby*, the Corinthians eating, *unworthily*, and their not discerning the Lord’s body, signifies, “ their behaving themselves as if they had not considered that this Sacrament was instituted in thankful and practical remembrance of Christ’s dying for

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 21, 22.

² 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

them, and ratifying, by His blood, the covenant, in which He promised *to be merciful to their iniquities, and remember their sins, no more*; and as a feast of love designed, equally, for the benefit of all His members, and to knit them in the closest bonds of unity and friendship to each other; when this was wanting, they did not discern aright the Lord's body, or the Sacrament of it, and so did eat and drink unworthily." The same able writer continues: "He that eateth this Holy Sacrament, with a thankful memorial of the benefits conferred upon us, the death from which we are delivered by the blood of *Christ*, the true *paschal* Lamb sacrificed for us, eats it, worthily; but he that partakes of it, only, as common bread and wine, not considering the ends for which it was designed, and the benefits of Christ's death it represented and *consigned*, *discerns not the Lord's body*, that is, he putteth no sufficient difference betwixt that and common food ^a." Yet, even in this case, it may be added, the Apostle does not recommend *abstinence* from the Sacrament, but *caution* how it is received: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup ^b." Thus, every abuse and unworthiness that should deter from the Sacrament may be corrected and avoided. The nature and importance of the ex-

^a Note by Daniel Whitby, D.D. on 1 Cor. xi. 29.

^b 1 Cor. xi. 28.

amination recommended, before approaching the altar, will be the subject of the following Discourse.

Having now considered the *origin*, the *institution*, and the *nature*, of the Sacrament, and having cautioned against any mistake, or undue fear, of the Apostle's admonition, *not* to eat or drink the bread and wine, *unworthily* ; it might be hoped, that very little need be added respecting the *obligation*, under which all, who name the name of Christ, are to receive this most comfortable Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, in obedience to His command ; a command, most plainly and most positively, given—" This do, in remembrance of me ^c." After this command, given by our blessed Saviour, when He was on the point of surrendering up His sacred life ; if we still refuse, through thoughtlessness ; under a plea of unworthiness, or any other plea that, usually, keeps Christians from this obedience, to do as the Apostle recommends, namely, to examine ourselves, and, so prepare ourselves to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, we are guilty of a sin of omission, for which we shall, in vain, plead any excuse : and, to our great injury, we slight that solemn commemoration of Christ's meritorious Cross and Passion, " whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven ^d."

^c St. Luke xxii. 19.

^d Warning for the celebration of the Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer.

Such conduct is unwise ; and such as no generous person could practise towards an earthly benefactor. To slight the dying request of a fellow-creature, from whom we have experienced no special favour, would, usually and justly, be deemed unkind ; to slight the request of one, from whom we had received signal favour, would be considered ungrateful ; but to slight the command of a dying SAVIOUR, is ingratitude of the deepest malignity ; sin of the darkest character. If we do so, let us not pretend that we love our Redeemer. He offered the true test of our love of Him, when he declared, “ He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” But, that we receive the Sacrament is His commandment. And it is plain, if we still refuse, then, we love to adhere to our sins, and, rather, to retain them, than to abandon them, and have communion with CHRIST, in the way that He hath ordained. But, let not sin, *reign in our mortal bodies* ^f, to deter us from eating of that bread, which is to nourish us to life eternal ; nor from drinking of that cup, which is to support us, through all the troubles of this transitory life. Let us *die unto sin* ; and so let us qualify ourselves to be meet partakers of these holy mysteries ; that, approaching, with clean hearts, the altar of God, upon earth, we may, through that

* St. John xiv. 15.

^f Rom. vi. 12.

blood, the shedding of which we commemorate, have our past sins blotted out, and become acceptable servants of God, through the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, might, praise, majesty, and dominion, this day, and evermore. *Amen.*

SERMON XVIII.

1 COR. xi. 28.

*Let a man examine himself; and so let him eat of that bread,
and drink of that cup.*

IN a former Discourse, I have stated the *origin*, the *institution*, and the *nature*, of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and, briefly, recommended to consideration the *obligation*, under which Christians are, to attend to the dying request of their Redeemer. "This do, in remembrance of me*."

Now, the Holy Sacrament being the most solemn Service of our HOLY RELIGION, we should not presume to receive it, but with a becoming seriousness; we should meditate, previously to our approaching the altar, on that tremendous sacrifice which was offered by the Son of God, in His own sacred Person, "who, being the brightness of His" (God's) "glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the Word of His Power, when He had by Himself purged our sins,

* St. Luke xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 24.

sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high^b.”

Gratefully meditating on this victory over sin, wrought by Him, whose throne is, for ever and ever, and whose sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness^c, we must, at the same time, most deeply, lament *that* vileness of which *we* partake, and which was the *occasion* of the Messiah's sufferings. It is not sufficient that we do this, *generally*,—we must turn our attention, *particularly*, within ourselves, and consider, *impartially*, the state of our souls; whether we are advancing in virtue and godliness, or whether we are declining to the ways of unholiness; whether we are *working out our salvation with fear and trembling*^d; or, whether we are dead unto Christ, and alive, only, unto sin: in short, we must attend to the apostolical admonition of the text: “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

Every person must, ordinarily, be the best judge how to make this examination; because every person best knows, if he will, *impartially*, judge himself, what are his failings, or what are his virtues; what are his sins, or what are his spiritual victories over sin. Yet, to penitent persons, some form of self-examination, whereby their duties to God, their neighbour, and themselves, are brought under separate heads, has been found very

^b Heb. i. 3.

^c Heb. i. 8.

^d Philip. ii. 12.

useful; and, indeed, however we may be disposed to search out the secret recesses of the soul, in the day of humiliation—some assistance of this kind will be found of important advantage. For the help of the well-disposed, we are not without admirable forms for the purpose. These may be found in “The New Whole Duty of Man,” in the “New Manual of Devotions,” and in various other godly books; but no one, perhaps, is better adapted to assist the mind, in a thorough and an impartial examination, than that which is to be found in “The New WEEK’S PREPARATION for a worthy receiving of THE LORD’S SUPPER.” Yet, after the best forms that can be adopted, much must depend on the sincerity of the party examining him, or herself; and many deficiencies must be supplied, which can only be known to the penitent, engaged in the examination. If there be an unfeigned sincerity to search out all “Sins, negligences, and ignorances,” they may, indeed, be searched out; but no book seems adapted, on the whole, to give better aid, in this important work, to the inquiring soul, conscious of its own imbecilities, and desirous to leave no sin unrepented of, than the one which has been just recommended to notice. And let the peni-

• Litany.

The Author of these Sermons has had great satisfaction in revising THE NEW WEEK’S PREPARATION. A common phraseology prevailed in that pious work, unpleasing to many good

tent, before he proceed to examination, seek assistance from heaven, so impartially, to examine himself, that he may leave no sin, if possible, unrepented of. Let him pray with the holy Psalmist :

“ Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting .”

Having made this examination, let the penitent, seriously and deeply, meditate on his sins, with all their *aggravations* ; and, then, humbly, confess them, *with a contrite heart*, unto ALMIGHTY GOD. Confession is the key to forgiveness ; but there can be no remission to the impenitent ; to those who acknowledge not their sins, and who confess not that they have done wrong. We all have sinned, and, except we repent, we all shall perish. Even the Saviour of sinners will save no sinner, without repentance ; though, upon repentance, we are assured of pardon and acceptance. We find the Psalmist, in acknowledgment of his particular iniquities, devoutly exclaiming : “ I acknowledge

Christians, and deterring them from the use of the book. It has been attempted to remove this objection, and so to continue the reputation of a work which has been long, and deservedly, prized for the excellent prayers, and for the edifying directions, which it contains. These, when unfeignedly used, cannot fail to excite, in the soul of the humble Christian, feelings and resolutions, favourable to growth in grace.

* Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.

my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;" it then follows, "and thou *forgavest* the iniquity of my sin¹." And St. *John*, in the like spirit, observes, for our admonition, doubtless: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: if we confess our sins; He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness¹." O! let us, then, confess our sins, with all their aggravations and peculiar basenesses, as they are best known unto ourselves: let us not resist the Holy Spirit of God, which reveals them unto us, and, secretly, admonishes us of our impieties, by, vainly, endeavouring to conceal them from Him, to whom all things are open, or by adding to them, while, proudly, disdaining a penitent confession of them; but, let us, meekly, acknowledge them, not to God, only, but to our brother, if we have, in any way, injured or offended him, by fraud or unkindness; by backwardness to be reconciled to him, or by repugnance to receive his offers of apology and reconciliation,—which repugnance, wheresoever it prevails, betrays an unchristian spirit that should be repented of. Above all, carrying our views up to our Father, which is in heaven: let us, each for himself, penitently, indeed, but generously, say: "I will arise, and go to my Father, and will say unto

¹ Psalm xxxii. 5.

¹ 1 St. John i. 8, 9.

Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son :.” “ God be merciful to me a sinner ^h !” “ Enter not into judgment, with thy servant : for in thy sight shall no man living be justified ^l .”

But, in vain, we examine ourselves, and confess our sins, if there we stop. Having, thus far, humbled ourselves, and prayed to God, as we must, if we are impressed with horror, as we should be, for His gracious pardon, we must, then, proceed to *holy resolutions* against falling into those sins, which we have confessed. Indeed, without this, there is no repentance ; no repentance without resolution, and consequent amendment ; no “ repentance to salvation, not to be repented of ^m .” The holy Psalmist was so firmly resolved against sin, that he extended his resolution even to the words of his mouth : “ I said I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me ⁿ ;” that is, while I am in the midst of temptation in this world, exposed to sin and every iniquity. And, further, as to the resolution against evil thoughts, in a deep knowledge of his own weakness and inability to assist himself, the good Psalmist devoutly prays : “ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

^l St. Luke xv. 18, 19.

^h St. Luke xviii. 13.

^l Psalm cxliii. 2.

^m 2 Cor. vii. 10.

ⁿ Ps. xxxix. 1.

Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ; and uphold me with thy free spirit^o." And again : " Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity^p."

Thus, devoutly, *we* must resolve against that wickedness, into which we have, unhappily, fallen ; and our resolution must be carried, not only against wilful sins of *commission* ; of intemperance ; of wicked lusts ; of fraud ; of profaneness ; of lying ; of slandering ; of covetousness ; or, in the more emphatic language of Scripture, not only against " adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like^q ;" but, also, against all vain and wicked imaginations of the heart ; and against every wicked word that proceedeth out of the mouth.

But, " who is sufficient for these things ? Man is fallen from righteousness, and the imaginations of his heart are only evil, continually. " Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean^r ?" And " what is man, that he should be clean ? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous ?" O ! let us all, while we reflect, in

^o Ps. li. 10—12.

^p Ps. cxli. 3, 4.

^q Gal. v. 19—21.

^r 2 Cor. ii. 16.

^s Job xiv. 4.

^t Job xv. 14.

humility, on our wretched state, feel our dependence upon the Almighty for His gracious succour: and, feeling it, let us, devoutly, approach the throne of grace, and, fervently, supplicate the aid of God's Holy Spirit, to support us in every trying scene of spiritual difficulty, and under every pressure of temptation. Knowing that our strength is in God; and that, without Him, we are unable to *think*, much less to *do*, any good thing, let us hold constant communion with Him, in prayer. Let us never omit, every morning and evening, to devote ourselves to His service, and to intreat His Almighty protection. Let us, also, delight to approach Him in His temple, and to join with holy men upon earth, in praising Him for His mercies, and in beseeching Him to support us in every changing scene; to uphold us in virtue and holiness, and to deliver us from all evil. God is, ever, true to His promise, and will not suffer His faithful children, who pray unto Him, with honest and pure hearts, to remain unanswered. "Call upon me," he says "in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee °." "Come unto me," says our blessed Saviour, "all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you." "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you P." Can you read these gracious invitations from your God and your Saviour; and

° Psalm l. 15.

P St. Matt. vii. 7.

can you doubt of His readiness to protect all those who put their trust in Him, against every danger that can assault their souls: and, not doubting His readiness, can you be backward to pour forth your souls unto Him, in ardent supplication, that He will be pleased to put into your minds and hearts good desires, and to grant you His all-powerful assistance to carry the same into effect? Be not so insensible to your own best and eternal interests as to neglect petitioning that aid, without which, you cannot stand, and without which, you can, never, rise again, when you have, unhappily, fallen. Knowing that your true happiness is in the favour of God, seek Him, in the way that all holy men,—the Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Apostles, have sought Him,—*by prayer*: and He, who is faithful to His word, will not suffer His children to fall from their stedfastness; “but will, with the temptation, also, make a way to escape.”

To sincere and diligent prayer, you must, however, add your own *most zealous endeavours* to do the will of God, and to preserve yourselves untainted by sin. In vain, you pray *not to be led into temptation*, if you run into those scenes, and pursue those courses, which you know endanger your virtue. If, then, you are sincere in your desire to be protected from sin, you will avoid all *occasions* of sin. Are you, in your nature, disposed to in-

temperance? Avoid the company of all who indulge in this vice; and strive, generally, against the gratification of your appetites, beyond what is proper to the necessities, or conveniences, of that situation of life, in which it has pleased God to place you. Are you disposed to the lusts of uncleanness? Then, avoid, especially, all luxurious living that may enflame your sinful desires; and be ever employed in some honest occupation, that may divert your attention from vain and wicked emotions. Are you addicted to covetousness? Reflect how little you, really, want, in this world; how short a time you will need that little; and how it becomes you, in this your season of probation, to secure an interest in the kingdom of heaven, by a generous distribution of that wealth which a merciful God hath entrusted to you. Are you prone to murmur, because your situation is not so comfortable, in this world, as you wish it? Strive, then, to become, "rich in good works," to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;" and know, that every advance you make in virtue, is to you an increase in the favour of God, and of more real value than all worldly substance. Are you inclined to petulance towards your brethren; to angry thoughts and hasty expressions; for want of reviewing transactions, in their just

^r 1 Tim. vi. 18.

^s Coloss. i. 10.

nature? Cultivate, then, that charity, that kindness of disposition, which *suffereth long and is kind, which is not easily provoked, which believeth all things, hopeth all things*[†]. And be ready, ever, when quarrels, or mistakes have arisen, between you, and any individual, freely, to offer, and, as freely to receive, every tender of reconciliation. So, friendship will be restored and preserved: it may, on candid explanation, be cemented even stronger than though no misunderstanding had arisen. Every lovely effort to this effect, is, remember, truly Christian. Are you addicted to “*envyings*”[‡]? Consider how ungenerous, how unmanly, a vice this is. It is sinning without any other temptation than that of gratifying one of the worst inclinations that can depress the soul. This is not, to “*rejoice with them that do rejoice*”[§]. The prophets and the apostles teach you a better lesson. They were grieved for the vices of their fellow-creatures; but, ever, encouraged the noblest feelings of joy for whatever contributed to the spiritual, or temporal, good of their brethren. “*Horror,*” saith the royal prophet, “*hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law*”[¶]. And St. Paul, thus earnestly, aspires for the spiritual good of the Israelites. “*Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that*

† 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. 7.

‡ Gal. v. 21.

§ Rom. xii. 15.

¶ Psalm cxix. 53.

they might be saved !” Cultivate this sympathy towards your fellow-creatures, that you may, truly, delight in their spiritual good : and it will, naturally, extend itself towards their temporal prosperity ; so that you will, never, envy them their good fortunes. On the contrary ; “ let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted ; forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you .” Wherever this blessed temper prevails, there can be no “ envyings.”

Enough has been remarked to convey the state of mind, and the habit of life, in which it is desirable that the penitent Christian should approach the HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER. May God grant His blessing upon the words which have been uttered, that they may not have been uttered in vain ! They are, in spirit, the same as is in the admirable exhortation to the Communion, in the book of Common Prayer, which we shall do well, frequently, and very seriously, to read, and, inwardly, digest ; remembering, also, what is said in the Catechism, to be required of them who come to the Lord’s Supper, namely, “ to examine themselves, whether they repent them, truly, of their former sins ; steadfastly purposing to lead a new

* Rom. x. 1.

* Ephes. iv. 31.

life; to have a lively faith in God's mercy, through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and to be in charity with all men." Thus prepared, we may encompass the altar, with humble joy, and our souls, will be strengthened by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine. We may, so fortified by the means prescribed unto us, be enabled to "add to" our "faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity^b." And, finally, thus striving to *work out our salvation*, through divine assistance, under God's blessing on his ordinances, which we have revered; we may indulge a well-grounded hope, that an entrance, "shall be administered unto" us "abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ^c;" to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, praise, might, majesty, and dominion, this day, and for ever. *Amen.*

^b 2 Pet. i. 5—7. ^c 2 Pet. i. 11.

WILLIAM LUTHER, M. A. Rector of the Church of St. Andrew, in the City of London.

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SERMON XIX.

1 COR. XVI. 13.

Watch ye ; stand fast in the faith ; quit you like men ; be strong.

THE rules offered in Scripture to encourage us to perseverance in holiness, are adapted to our personal weakness ; and are, mercifully, given, in consideration of the numerous temptations to sin, to which we are subject, in this our season of trial. The best of us need these salutary cautions, that we fall not from our steadfastness ; and happy are they who attend to them !

The great duty of Christian watchfulness is, often, most affectionately, recommended to us, in both the Old and the New Testament. In the Old Testament, when *Moses* repeated to the children of Israel the mercies of the Lord, in having brought them from a state of bondage, he exhorts them to be cautious, lest they should forget God in the day of their success and prosperity. “ When,” he, emphatically, observes, “ the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land, which He sware unto thy Fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to

Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not. And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not; and wells digged, which thou diggedst not; vineyards and olive trees which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten, and be full; then, beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve Him*.”

But, how much greater things than these have been, graciously, performed for *us*, who are the disciples of JESUS CHRIST? *We* have houses full of all good things, which *we* filled not, and wells digged, which *we* digged not; *we* have vineyards and olive trees, which *we* planted not: *we* have eaten, plentifully, of the goodness of the Lord in JESUS CHRIST, and are full of His choicest blessings. O, may *we*, never, forget the mercies that have been showered upon us! *We* have a bread, of which *whoso eateth*, that is, whoso eateth it, with due faith, inclining him to holiness, *shall live for ever*^b. But, when we *have* eaten of this spiritual food, and when we enjoy the inestimable blessings of health, and the competencies of life: *then*, let us beware that *we* “forget not the Lord” our “God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His

* Deut. vi. 10—13. See also Ch. viii.

^b St. John vi. 58.

statutes^e.” *Then*, let not our hearts be lifted up to forget the Lord our God^d; then let us “remember the Lord” our “God: for it is He that giveth” us “power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore unto” our “fathers.”

In *the New Testament*, the same admonition to the remembrance of God, and to the watchfulness against all that would detach us from the love of Him and from our duty, is, often, inculcated. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,” saith our blessed Saviour, “with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment^f.” Now the commission of sin will, certainly, weaken our love of God, and, therefore, watchfulness against all sin is, frequently, recommended in the Sacred Writings. Our blessed Saviour, thus, recommends watchfulness, “for” He says, “ye know not what hour your Lord doth come^g.” “Watch ye, therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the House cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping^h.” “Watch ye, therefore, and pray, always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of

^e Deut. viii. 11.

^d Ver. 14.

^e Ver. 18.

^f St. Matt. xxii. 37, 38.

^g St. Matt. xxiv. 42.

^h Mark xiii. 35, 36.

Man¹." And, again : " Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak^k." These are exhortations to watchfulness, given by our blessed Saviour, as they are recorded by the Evangelists.

Such admonitions are most useful, at all times, and in all seasons ; but they are, especially, proper to be regarded by us, when we have, solemnly, dedicated ourselves to God and his service, in THE COMMUNION OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST. *Then*, we should be, peculiarly, circumspect, not to fall from those good resolutions, into which, we have, by the grace of God, entered ; *then*, we should be, deeply, intent on not being, again, entangled in the sins which we profess to have forsaken ; *then*, we should be most anxious to " lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us ;" *then*, " let us run with patience the race that is set before us ; looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith ; who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God¹."

I shall, now, offer some familiar directions, whereby we may be enabled, by God's blessing, so to conduct ourselves, *after receiving the Holy Sacrament*, as to establish ourselves in holiness,

¹ St. Luke xxi. 36.

^k St. Mark xiv. 38.

¹ Heb. xii. 1, 2.

under the blessing of God, and to *endure unto the end*, that we may be saved ^u.

First, that we may establish ourselves in holiness, I must, again, recommend, as has been, frequently; recommended, in the Sermons of this Volume, the great, the important, the indispensable, duty of sincere and fervent prayer to ALMIGHTY GOD. Prayer is the life of godliness, in the soul of man. Pray then, most devoutly, unto God, for His gracious assistance to preserve and uphold you in a sanctified state, and to protect you from the commission of wickedness ^v. We are all weak, and

^u St. Matthew x. 22. xxiv. 13.

^v To those who may desire assistance how to pray with fervency, and with propriety, in the various seasons, and the sundry necessities, of this life; the author would, respectfully, and affectionately, recommend an admirable volume, entitled, "A New Manual of Devotions, in three Parts: Part I. containing Prayers for Families and Private Persons. Part II. containing Offices, I. Of Humiliation, II. For the Sick, III. For Women with Child. Part III. consisting of an Office for the Holy Communion: to which are added, some Occasional Prayers."

Next to the Bible, a more valuable present cannot be presented to any rich or poor person, devoutly disposed to improve in the Christian temper. The volume is in the list of books recommended by the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," and may be had on the moderate terms of that excellent association.

There is, in the volume recommended, "An introductory Discourse Concerning Prayer," most pious, most judicious, most practical! May God assist with His grace all who are

worse than weak, in ourselves. We are, absolutely, prone to evil from our cradle; and we shall find, every step we take in life, some temptation suitable to the sin to which we are, in our respective natures, peculiarly exposed. Thus inclined to sin, *within*, and exposed to danger, *from without*, if we think that we shall stand, while we rely upon our own strength, and neglect to supplicate the aid of God's grace, we shall find ourselves, miserably, deceived. Our strength is in God; and our constant, our daily, our habitual entreaty, to this our heavenly Father, should be, that we, and the whole world, may HALLOW HIS NAME; that we may glorify Him, as we ought, in our thoughts and desires; in our words and our conduct; that the kingdoms of the world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; that Christ may dwell and rule in our hearts, by His Spirit and grace; and make us a willing people, the faithful subjects of His holy kingdom; that, while we are in the body, God, who best knoweth what is fitting for us, would grant us all things that may be needful, both for our bodies and souls; and, graciously, provide that all which we have, in this life, may help us on to the blessed LIFE IMMORTAL; that He would be pleased to forgive us *our* trespasses, as *we* forgive

anxious to become perfect in holiness, by imprinting on their hearts a principle of love and obedience; without which prayer may not be heard, nor praise be accepted!

those who have trespassed against *us* : since *we*, humble and penitent for *our* sins, intreat His gracious favour in CHRIST JESUS, for the pardon of them ; that He will never suffer us to be tempted above the strength, wherewith His grace will supply us ; that, knowing we are poor and sinful creatures, He would make us wary to avoid all temptations, and strong in His power to overcome what we must encounter—that so, we may be preserved from falling, and never be delivered into those bitter pains of eternal death, which are the sad wages of our sins. These things let us all, fervently and frequently, ask of Almighty God, our heavenly Father ; since His is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever ; that is, since HE is the Lord Most High, the King of all the world, able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think—and, since His grace is powerful to work everlasting glory in the salvation of those who were lost, but who, now, are repentant, and trust, only, in His gracious goodness, through the all-sufficient merits and mediation of our blessed Redeemer ; and who look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to eternal life.

This is a short and familiar exposition of the spirit of the Lord's Prayer^a ; a prayer, given unto us

^a See an excellent family prayer, in the order of our Lord's Prayer, in a volume of "Prayers and Offices of Devotion for Families and particular Persons, upon most Occasions." By Benjamin Jenks, late Rector of *Harley*, in Shropshire, and

by HIM, who knew our need of the assistance of Divine grace, who was Himself a pattern to us of prayer, as He was of every divine and holy exercise, frequently, retiring from the converse of the world, to hold communion with God. If HE “who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth”¹ prayed to His Father in heaven, to glorify Him, that He also might glorify His Father²: if He, in the day of His bitter suffering for us, pathetically prayed, “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause, came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy Name³.” if the Son of God, who was the *brightness of His Father’s glory*, and “the express image of His person⁴,” found it good to be thus employed in prayer; let us, after His sacred example; after the example of the Prophets and Apostles, delight in prayer: let us pray, without ceasing; but let us pray, in sincerity; for we know, to our great and endless comfort, that “the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him, in truth⁵,” and we are assured, that our Heavenly Father will “give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him⁶.”

Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of *Bradford*. Nineteenth Edition, 1776.

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 22. ² St. John xvii. 1.
³ St. John xii. 27, 28. ⁴ Heb. i. 3.
⁵ Ps. cxlv. 18. ⁶ St. Luke xi. 13.

Secondly, if, in any evil and unguarded hour, we, relaxing in our watchfulness, should not stand fast in the faith, as we are recommended to do in the text; but, while we profess ourselves Christians, should do the work of the wicked, and should, after we have received of the grace of God, still drop into any act of sin; let us, speedily, acknowledge our vileness; let us, sorrowfully, confess unto heaven, that we have not quitted ourselves like Christians, nor been *strong in the Lord*; let us repent of our wickedness, and humble ourselves in our own eyes. Then, let us arise and go to our Father, and say: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Then, let us "awake to righteousness, and sin not"; let us apply to Christ; let us arise from the dead, and Christ will give us light.

And to encourage ourselves to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, in a holy, well-ordered life; let us impress upon our souls the various arguments used in the Scriptures to urge us to obedience; from a grateful remembrance of God's mercies, abundantly, heaped upon us; from the terrible punishment denounced on the disobedient; and from the great and everlasting benefits that will follow our obedience. All these arguments were, repeatedly, impressed upon the Israelites,

^u St. Luke xv. 18, 19.

^{*} 1 Cor. xv. 84.

^y Eph. v. 14.

^z St. Matt. iii. 8. Luke iii. 8.

by *Moses*, as may be seen in the Book of *Deuteronomy*, especially, in the ninth and tenth chapters, which we shall all do well, seriously, to read, and, frequently, to meditate on. But, let us, still further, consider, how much more forcibly all these arguments to obedience might be urged upon *us*, and how much more inexcusable *we* shall be than the *Israelites* were, if, after the stupendous benefits which we have received from our BLESSED SAVIOUR; if, after all the threatenings which HE hath denounced against those who reject Him; and if, after the great things that He hath promised unto those who love Him, and keep His commandments; we shall turn aside from our constancy; repeatedly, break our solemn vows; do despite unto the Spirit of grace; and, by a habit of sin, crucify to ourselves, the Son of God afresh ^a!

O! let us all, most seriously, consider, that, though there is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared ^b; and though “when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right; he shall save his soul alive ^c,” yet that relapses into sin, after we have tasted of the grace of God, and confessed our sins, and made resolutions to forsake them, are most dangerous to the spiritual life. They tend, indeed, to harden our hearts, and to

^a Heb. vi. 6.

^b Ps. cxxx. 4.

^c Ezek. xviii. 27.

stifle the motions of God's Holy Spirit, within us; and may, finally, as the just reward of impenitence,—while we have cried out, Lord! Lord! but neglected to do the will of our Father, which is in heaven,—plunge us into a judicial blindness, a wretched insensibility of sin, till we commit it “with greediness^d,” and our last state becomes worse than the first^e. May God bless us with His all-powerful aid, that we, never, so persist in sin, as thus to *harden our hearts*; lest He say unto us, in His wrath, that we should *not enter into His rest*! Let us, rather, strive to be of the number of those righteous worshippers, of whom St. John heard a voice from heaven, saying unto him: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them^f.”

Thirdly, let the consideration of our lapses into sin, our back-slidings, incline us to cultivate the most charitable forbearance towards the failings of our brethren; for this is the temper which the religion of Christ requires, and in which we are to grow, and improve ourselves, as we expect to share, hereafter, the loving kindness and forbearance of that Lord, whose righteous laws, we have, in various

^d Eph. iv. 19.

^e Ps. xcvi.

^f Matt. xii. 45.

^g Rev. xiv. 13.

ways; repeatedly, transgressed; and who, yet, hath born long with us.

The forbearance of God towards the sinner is, beautifully, and gratefully, acknowledged by Archdeacon *Paley*. "Of all the attributes of God," says that pious and able writer, "forbearance, perhaps, is that which we have most to acknowledge. We cannot want occasion to bring the remembrance of it to our thoughts. Have there not been occasions, in which, ensnared by vice, we might have been detected and exposed; have been crushed by punishment, or shame; have been, irrevocably, ruined? Occasions, in which we might have been, suddenly, stricken with death, in a state of soul, the most unfit for it that was possible? That we were none of these; that we have been preserved from these dangers; that our sin was not our destruction; that instant judgment did not overtake us, is to be attributed to the suffering of God. We were not destroyed, when we might have been destroyed, and when we merited destruction. We have been reserved for further trial. This is, or ought to be, a touching reflection. How deeply, therefore, does it behove us, not to trifle with the patience of God, not to abuse this enlarged share, this respited, protracted season of repentance, by plunging afresh into the same crimes, or other, or greater crimes^h."

^h Archdeacon *Paley*, quoted in D'Oyly and Mant's Bible, on Deut. ix. 27.

Such is the use that we should, from the most generous feelings of love, make of God's forbearance; and then, in gratitude, we should, humbly, strive to engraft in our souls a due portion of the same spirit of forbearance and kindness towards our fellow-creatures, who have failed in their duty. Then, acknowledging our own unprofitableness, let us not surrender ourselves to slothful inactivity, or to a worse state of wilful sin. Let us beware, lest, having dedicated ourselves to God, and, then, being led away with the error of the wicked, we depart from our steadfastness. Let us, rather, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ," labouring *to work out our salvation with fear and trembling*^b; that is, with *fear*, lest we be seduced from a godly state; and *trembling*, for the just judgment of God, denounced against all unrighteousness. Still, whatever our labours may be in the way of our salvation, the subsequent verse, plainly, teaches us to look up to a power greater than is in man for spiritual aid; since, at the same time that we are exhorted *to work out our salvation*, we are admonished that it is *God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*^c. Thus, from first to last, it is to God that we are indebted for every good thought and deed: only, we must pray unto

^a 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18.^b Phil. ii. 12.^c Phil. ii. 13.

Him for pardon, and we must pray *from a pure heart*, for “we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth^m.”

We have, thus, in the two preceding Sermons, and in this, considered the origin; the institution; and the nature, of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; the obligation to Communion; the duty of examination, generally necessary, before Communion, and how we may be able, by God's blessing, so to conduct ourselves, after Communion, as to establish ourselves in “holiness, without which no man shall see the Lordⁿ.” Receive, then, the admonition of the text. “Watch ye; stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong.” Having, devoutly, joined in the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, your Saviour, remember the grand lesson of your redemption which that solemn service teaches you;—how that Christ submitted to death, that He might conquer sin, and purchase salvation for you; and, how deadly, therefore, in its nature, sin must be. Every time, therefore, that you commemorate the great sacrifice of your Redeemer, you should strive, more and more, to partake of His spirit, and to let the Bread and Wine, of which you eat, join you in still stricter and more inseparable communion with Him, that “He may abide in you, and you in

^m St. John ix. 31.

ⁿ Heb. xii. 14.

Him^o," that, *eating his flesh, and drinking his blood*^p, whose "flesh is meat indeed," and whose "blood is drink indeed^q," *you may dwell in Him, and He in you*^r, according to His sacred meaning, when He said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life^s," in short, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts, by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power of the Holy Ghost, that worketh in us. Unto Him be glory in the Church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. *Amen*^t."

^o St. John xv. 4.

^p St. John vi. 54.

^q Ib. 55.

^r Ib. 56.

^s Ib. 63.

^t Ephes. iii. 17—21.

THE END.

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